

BOYS, READ THE RADIO ARTICLES IN THIS NUMBER

No. 963

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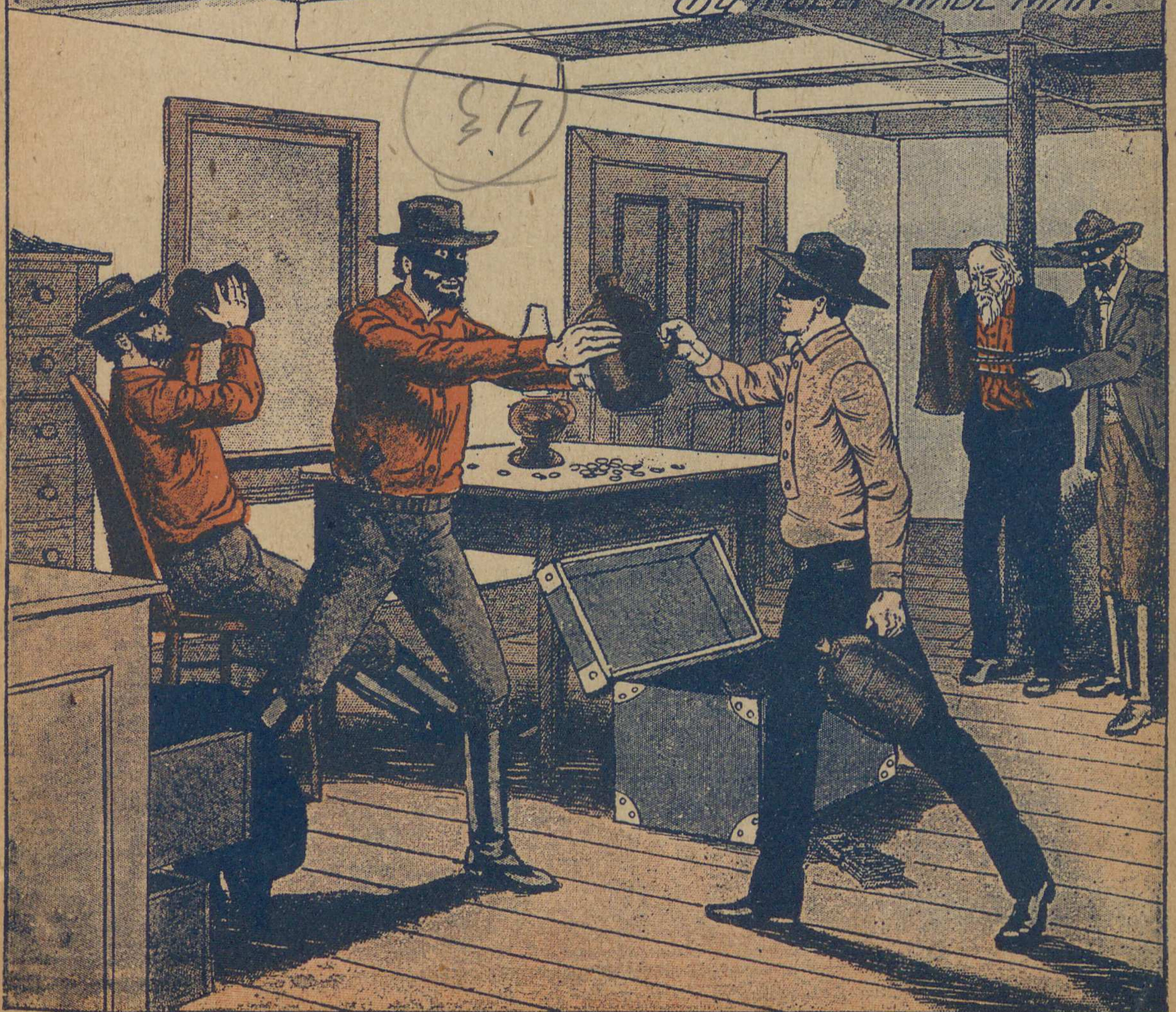
Price 8 Cents

FAME ^{AND} FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.

A ROLLING STONE; *AND OTHER STORIES* OR THE BRIGHTEST BOY ON RECORD.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.



Having secured Matthew Scraggs to a post in the rear of the room, the ruffians ordered Paul to bring forward the demijohns of liquors from the shelf in the corner. Then they proceeded to make merry over their rich haul.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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NEW YORK, MARCH 14, 1924

Price 8 Cents.

A ROLLING STONE

OR, THE BRIGHTEST BOY ON RECORD

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—Paul Scott and His Companion, Toby Titmarsh.

"Wake up, Toby; I see the lights of San Luis straight ahead!" exclaimed Paul Scott.

The speaker, a stalwart, good-looking boy of seventeen, whose bright eyes and shrewd, alert expression showed that he was above the average in smartness, was driving a strong young mare, attached to a small covered wagon, along a dusty road within sight of the Pacific Ocean. A prolonged snore was the only response that came from his companion—an uncommonly fat youth, of perhaps fifteen, whose open mouth, pudgy nose, and small eyes, were almost lost in the fleshy folds of an enormous pair of cheeks that gave his countenance the appearance of a full moon—who occupied two-thirds of the seat, his head propped against the front hoop of the van, and his senses steeped in a profound repose.

"Don't you want something to eat, Toby?" roared Paul in his ear.

The snoring stopped all of a sudden, one eye opened, then the other; finally the fat boy sat up and gazed around him into the dusk which was closing in upon the landscape.

"I thought I heard somebody say dinner was ready," he squeaked, a wistful, hungry look shining from his eyes.

"You must have been dreaming," chuckled Paul, as he chirruped to the mare.

"Maybe I was; but it sounded awful real," replied the boy, smacking his lips.

"You've got the healthiest appetite for a small boy I ever saw. It's a wonder you wouldn't get fat," Paul grinned.

"I thought I was kind of fat," said Toby, looking down at his body, which filled the larger part of the seat.

"Oh, no, you aren't fat. You're only obese."

"What's that?"

"A person is obese when he has an excessive accumulation of adipose tissue," chuckled Paul.

"Have I an excessive accumulation of adipose tissue?"

"Well, rather. You must weigh nearly 200 pounds."

"I don't know. I tried to get weighed the other

day in Los Angeles, but the man said I broke his scales."

"Why didn't you go down to the market where they scrape fish and stand on the scales. You couldn't break them."

"What good would that do?"

"You could have given yourself away," chuckled Paul.

Toby didn't see the joke, and he wondered how the scales of the fish would have told him how much he weighed. And while he was wondering they reached the outskirts of San Luis and drove into that town. Paul had the name of a cheap hotel, and he asked a passerby to direct him to it. In fifteen minutes they arrived in front of the hostelry, and Paul descended from his perch and went in to arrange for a square meal for himself and his companion.

Then he led the wagon into a small yard, gave the mare a drink, tied a bag of oats around her nose, and leaving her to the enjoyment of her evening meal, he led Toby into the washroom, where they tidied themselves up a bit before they marched into the dining-room. A red-cheeked young woman waited on them when they took their places at the table. The bill of fare consisted of fried Spanish mackerel, a small steak, boiled potatoes, coffee and pie. After their meal they again started off. The wagon was stopped in the busiest section of San Luis, a couple of naphtha torches were stuck into the sockets at the rear of the van, the back of which was let down a box containing small vials and little round tin boxes and placed on the front of the platform, then Paul fetched out a couple of stools, and called Toby, who made his appearance with black face and hands, a wig, a huge collar and checked shirt, and a pair of immensely long shoes. He had a pair of bones in his hands and he made a most comical negro artist. Paul himself produced a banjo, tuned up, and then the pair launched into an old-time ducky quickstep. Quite a number of persons had already gathered about the van, but the music soon attracted a crowd. After Paul had rendered an old plantation ditty in good style, which the spectators roundly applauded, he proceeded to business.

"Gentlemen," he began, taking a bottle with a

gaudy label from the box before him, "I have here some of my celebrated Elixir of Life, manufactured by myself, and I alone know the secret of it. This Elixir is two bits a bottle. Taken internally, it's a sure cure for coughs, colds, sore throat, sprain of the vocal organs, and like ills, too numerous to mention, a catalogue of which will be found on the wrapper. Full directions are printed on the label, and I can guarantee perfect satisfaction, or the money will be cheerfully refunded. This gentleman takes a bottle. Thank you, sir. Who'll take another bottle? Thank you, sir. You say you want two bottles? Four bits, please. No, sir; there's no discount, not even if you want a dozen bottles. I'm practically giving this stuff away at the price. Some of the medicines used in the manufacture of this peerless cough mixture are controlled by the Drug Trust, which greatly reduces the profit on the article. The Glass Trust—but there, gentlemen, you all know what cormorants the trusts are. They are the bane of this country. If you come a little nearer, sir, I will be able to hand you a bottle. Thank you, sir. Who's next? You, sir? Certainly. Will it cure tootache? No, sir, I am sorry to say that it will not. This is a lung balsam, not a lotion for the teeth. Have you a toothache? Step right up on the platform and I will endeavor to relieve you in three shakes of a lamb's tail, and it won't cost you a cent. Take a seat on that stool. Now, sir, open your mouth and point out the diseased molar."

Paul took a piece of cotton and a bottle of laudanum from his pocket, which he had been using himself, and wetting the cotton, pressed it into the decayed tooth. In a moment or two the man said he believed the tooth felt better.

"I'm glad to hear it, sir. I dare say that in half an hour the pain will be all gone. You wish to take a bottle of my Elixir? Don't open it until you have occasion to use it, and follow directions carefully. No, I do not guarantee that it will cure consumption. If I could make an Elixir that would master that disease my fortune would soon be made. Who wishes another bottle? Sold again and got the money."

Paul sold a dozen or fifteen bottles of his cough mixture and then the demand for it ceased. He took up his banjo and he and Toby played another air. For an hour and a half the bystanders were alternately entertained and importuned to purchase the salve and the Elixir of Life. Then the street began to grow deserted and Paul shut up shop for the night. The covered wagon was driven into a vacant lot, the mare taken out of the shafts and tethered near by, and the two boys retired to rest inside the van.

CHAPTER II.—Held Up.

Paul Scott was a sort of rolling stone. He made a living and was accumulating profit by traveling from town to town selling his throat and lung balsam, and his infallible remedy for corns and bunions—both of which he and Toby manufactured themselves from reliable prescriptions, and which, as a rule, proved beneficial when taken according to the printed directions accompanying the article. Paul, though often flowery

and liberal with his words, was always perfectly honest with the public, and had no fear of retracing his route at any time. At the present time he was touring southern California, working northward toward San Francisco, and thus far had been quite successful since leaving San Diego. Paul had picked up Toby Titmarsh in San Diego. The fat boy was an orphan, too. Just why Paul took a fancy to the youth he couldn't explain, but he hired the lad for a small wage and his keep, and Toby in return became his faithful and willing helper. Paul fitted him out, taught him to play the bones pretty well, and was delighted to find that when blacked up the fat youth made quite a hit as a negro minstrel. Next morning early Paul hitched up and drove to the hotel for breakfast, after which he stationed the wagon at a prominent corner and continued to advertise and dispose of his balsam and corn cure until noon.

After dinner they took to the road again en route for San Bruno, a small coast town a few miles to the northward. Three rough-looking men on horseback left San Luis at the same time and jogged along the road behind them. An hour passed and the horsemen maintained the same distance behind the wagon. There was nothing singular in this. Paul, however, didn't fancy the general appearance of the strangers. The road passed over a low spur of the mountain range beside which they were journeying, before reaching San Bruno, and Paul had heard in San Luis that a gang of bandits, whose retreat was supposed to be in these mountains, had been holding up travelers along the highroad and robbing dwellings on the outskirts of the neighboring towns.

"Do you see those three horsemen behind us, Toby?" asked Paul, as the road began to leave the vicinity of the shore and curve upward into the range.

Toby twisted his chubby face around the outside of the front hoop supporting the canvas covering of the van and looked backward along the highway.

"Sure I see them," he answered.

"Do you know, I don't like their looks," said Paul, seriously.

"Oh, my, do you think they mean to rob us?" gasped Toby, putting his hand in his pocket where his few dollars in savings were.

"They look capable of doing most anything for the sake of money. They've been following us ever since we left San Luis."

Toby's eyes began to start from their sockets in fear.

"I noticed one of those chaps—the fellow with the smooth face—in the crowd last night when we were doing such a rushing business. I also noticed him hanging around the different corners where we held forth this morning. Then the three of them took dinner at the hotel when we did, and when we drove out of the yard I saw them having their horses saddled. We wasn't a great way down the street before I noticed them jogging along behind the van, and they've been there ever since, though it's nearly three hours since we left San Luis. They may mean nothing, but I'm going to look out for them just the same, for their actions strike me as suspicious."

"You've got a bag of money, Paul. Where can you hide it?"

"I've got it hidden already where I don't think they'll look for it."

"I wish you'd put my money with it," said Toby, anxiously.

"Give me your money, all but a dollar, and hold the reins," said Paul.

Then he stepped over the seat into the body of the van, and for the next few minutes he was busily occupied in placing Toby's wealth in his secret receptacle which he had provided for just such an emergency.

"How long before we'll get to San Bruno?" asked Toby, nervously.

"If nothing happens we ought to reach the town in an hour."

"It's awful losesome up here in the hills," gurgled the fat boy.

They had now been out of sight of the ocean for fifteen minutes.

"It isn't very lively, that's a fact," agreed Paul. "We haven't seen many houses since we lost sight of San Luis."

"Are those men still behind us?" asked Toby, in shaky tones.

"They were a moment ago."

"They could rob us here and nobody would know a thing about it," he gasped.

"They couldn't select a better place to do such a thing," replied Paul, coolly.

They came to a level stretch and Paul started the mare on at a lively pace. Presently they heard the clattering of horses' hoofs behind. Nearer and nearer came the sound until it was close behind, then suddenly the horsemen dashed up on either side of the wagon, one of them spurring ahead and grabbing the mare by the bridle rein.

"What's this mean?" demanded Paul, resolutely, while Toby collapsed completely, and fell back into the van like a sack of corn.

"Get down!" replied the bearded ruffian, threatening the boy with his weapon at full cock.

The wagon was now at rest in the middle of the road. Paul decided that the easiest way was the best in dealing with these rascals, so he stepped down into the road.

"Throw up your hands!" cried the leader again. Paul obeyed.

"Search the wagon, Noach!" he exclaimed wrathfully. "Pull that other chap out into the road."

The man addressed as Noach leaped on the dashboard and tore the canvas flap aside. Then he reached down and grabbed the trembling Toby by the collar.

"Come out of there, you young pig!" he roared. "Come out, or I'll tickle your ribs with my bowie."

Toby emerged, his face as white as chalk, and shaking as with the palsy. As he stepped out on the dashboard the man gave him a push and the fat boy took a header into the hard road, where he rolled over and lay quite still, as though stunned by the shock.

"That's no way to treat a harmless boy," remonstrated Paul, indignantly.

"Shut up!" answered the leader, in an ugly tone.

Noah searched the van from end to end, but he found only some boxes containing bottles of cough syrup and little round tin boxes of salve, a couple of stray mattresses, which he ripped to pieces

with his bowie-knife, some bedclothes, a small trunk, the contents of which he hastily dumped out and scattered around pell-mell; a couple of stools, a banjo hanging against the side of the van, a few paper-covered books, a bound volume of medical recipes, and various other odds and ends of no value to any one but the owner. The one thing he was in quest of—namely, money—he did not find, and he so reported to the impatient man on horseback outside. The leader looked disappointed and he swore roundly.

"Bind that boy's hands behind him and chuck both of those chaps into the wagon," he said.

Paul's hands were secured and he was lifted into the van. Noach regarded Toby as too big a lift for him to tackle unaided, so he called to the man at the mare's head to dismount and help him. Toby was then bundled into the van without ceremony. Noach grabbed the reins, the other man took his horse by the bridle, and, preceded by the leader, they turned off the road a short distance further on and penetrated the silent fastnesses of the range.

CHAPTER III.—Paul Scott Becomes A Bandit.

The party left the road far behind them and headed for the heart of the range. It was rocky traveling for the wagon, which pitched from one side to the other like a water-logged craft in a heavy sea. Noach didn't seem to regard his job as driver of the van as a sinecure, for he swore every time the wheels gave a jolt and he received an unpleasant bounce on the seat. After an hour's ride the wagon reached a narrow opening in the hills of a width just sufficient to permit it to pass through without rubbing against the rocks. This defile, which had all the curves of a snake, admitted the party to a small amphitheater-like retreat in the range. The rocks rose hundreds of feet all around, shutting in the place on every side. The only object that relieved the absolute wildness of the spot was an old weather-scarred adobe house, of a single story, whose tiled roof, once a bright brick red, was now a dirty, faded brown. It had originally been erected by some Mexican fully one hundred years before. The wagon was drawn up in front of the door and the four horses turned loose to feed on the rich herbage with which the spot abounded.

"Come, now, get out of that, both of you!" roared Noach, sticking his head up over the seat.

"Go on, Toby," said Paul, "and I'll follow you. Be as lively as you can or that chap may treat you to another tumble."

Toby had experienced all the tumbles he wanted for that day at least, and he got out of the wagon as fast as he could. As he went out backward the seat of his trousers presented such a tempting mark that Noach fetched him a rap with the whip he held in his hand. Toby gave a dismal howl and slipped down in the grass.

"What did you do that for?" he whimpered, for the lash had stung him like a hornet's tail.

"Haw, haw, haw!" laughed Noach and the other man, whose name was Kettler.

Paul, who was following his helper, saw the whole thing, and his eyes flashed. He didn't say a word, for he knew remonstrances would be useless, but he hoped he would get the chance to

repay the rascal for his brutal conduct toward the inoffensive fat boy.

"Get up out of that!" cried Noach, flicking the whip about Toby's ears.

Toby got up as fast as his weight would permit him. The boys were marched into the house and secured in an inner room, which had only a narrow opening in one of the walls for a window. Entrance and exit could only be had through the main room in front occupied by the three rascals.

Noach immediately began to prepare supper. They had brought a considerable supply of food from San Luis in their capacious saddle-bags, together with several suspicious-looking flasks that evidently contained whisky. They talked in loud, rough tones, and the two boys easily heard all they said. Toby was all broke up, and his full-moon countenance showed every symptom of distress.

His head hurt him, his jaw pained him and his back bothered him. It was clear he wasn't accustomed to rough handling, and Paul felt sorry for him. But as soon as the appetizing smell of bacon and eggs was wafted into their prison, Toby instantly forgot all his ills and began to smack his lips hungrily.

"Doesn't that smell good?" he remarked to Paul.

It certainly did, and Paul was forced to admit the pleasant fact.

"Do we get some?" asked the fat boy, eagerly.

"Probably."

Toby applied his eye to a hole in the door, and greedily followed the movements of the cook. He saw the bacon and eggs, done to a turn, dished out on the rude table on a porcelain dish, and the sight made him ravenously hungry. If the rascals had only provided themselves with a nice juicy pie the fat boy would probably have had a fit as he watched the bandits devour the spread. When the last egg and the last piece of bacon had been transferred to the plate of the leader, who was addressed as Murdock, Toby collapsed on the floor, for all his bright anticipations of supper seemed to vanish like dew before the morning sun.

"It's all gone," he said in heartbroken tones, turning toward Paul, who had been trying to figure out the situation.

"What's all gone?" asked Paul, looking at him.

"The eggs, and the bacon, and the bread and everything. They've cleaned the plates and we're not going to have a thing to eat."

"Oh, I guess they'll give us something."

But Toby shook his head in a melancholy way.

"Look and see for yourself," he said, pointing to the hole in the door.

Paul walked over and peered through into the next room. The three ruffians had filled their pipes and were enjoying a smoke.

"You'd better cook something for those young chaps in the room," said Murdock, jerking his thumb over his shoulder. "They must be hungry by this time."

So Noach cooked a couple of eggs and some more bacon, and the sizzling sound and its accompanying smell penetrated the room, and Toby's courage revived.

"Brace up, Toby," grinned Paul. "He's cooking our supper now."

The fat boy could hardly believe the good news until he looked into the room and saw what was

going on at the stove. Presently the door was opened, Paul was unbound and they were told to sit up to the table and help themselves. There was coffee enough left in the pot to supply them with a full cup each, and it didn't take Toby long to clean up his share of everything in sight. When Paul had finished, Murdock came up to the table.

"What's your name, young feller?" he asked.

"My name is Paul Scott."

"Well, look here. I'm goin' to make you a proposition. We's got a little affair on hand for to-night, and we want a chap of about your size to help us out. There's a lot of boodle in it, and if you'll jine us we'll give you a share of it, more than you'll make in a year sellin' that medicine stuff, and ter-morrer mornin' we'll let you take yer wagon and go. What d'ye say?"

"Suppose I refuse?" asked Paul.

"We'll tie you two chaps up and leave you here and do the job alone. As we don't mean to come back here no more, the chances are a thousand to one that you both will starve weeks before any one ever finds his way into this spot. So take your choice."

"I'll go with you," said Paul, promptly.

"The fat chap'll remain here till you come after him."

"Oh, lor'!" groaned Toby. "Must I stay here all alone?"

"You must," replied Murdock, impatiently, turning on his heel and rejoining his companions, who were standing at the door.

CHAPTER IV.—The Hermit-Miser.

"I never thought it of you," said Toby, looking at his companion reproachfully.

"Don't you see that I had to agree to help them out on the job they have in view to-night? A nice thing it would be if we were left here all by ourselves, bound hand and foot, like a pair of chickens, with no chance to get away and nothing to eat——"

"Nothing to eat?" gasped Toby. "Oh, lor'!"

"We'd starve to death before the week was out, and only our bones would be found in this isolated adobe shack, probably months from now. No, I couldn't afford to take that chance, for I saw that fellow meant to carry out his threat if I refused to join him. I'll be watched, of course, but I'm going to spoil their game if I can, and have them all captured and sent to jail, where they deserve to be."

It was now dusk, and Noach came inside, lit a lantern, which he placed on the table, and then ordered the boys to retire into the inner room.

Paul took up his position at the hole in the door which commanded the outer room, and saw Murdock and Kettler come inside, and the three gather about the table, on which Noach had already placed three whisky flasks. They lit their pipes afresh and began to talk about the expedition they had in view for that night.

The old fellow's name is Matthew Scraggs," began Murdock, after a preliminary drink and a pull at his pipe. "He lives with a little gal, his niece, I understand, in an old dwelling among the rocks of the seashore within a mile of San Bruno."

"And he's a miser, eh?" said Kettler, eagerly.

"Which means that he has a stack of coin hidden somewhere in his house."

"That's his reputation."

"How long has he lived in that place?" asked Noach.

"Five or six years."

"And hain't never been robbed?" exclaimed the ruffian, in surprise.

"I guess not. He keeps his cabin barricaded up, and there ain't but one way to reach it, and that's by way of the beach at low tide."

"Where did he get his money from?" inquired Kettler.

"How should I know? I ain't worryin' how he got it; what's been botherin' me is how to take it away from him."

"I should think it ought to be easy enough if he lives all alone so far from town."

"It isn't easy. His place is strong enough to stand a siege, and he's got a lot of skyrockets on the place ready to shoot off if he's attacked. The people in San Bruno all know about that, and in consideration of his payin' a sum of money to the old adobe church three times a year they stand ready to go to his assistance in case his signals announce danger."

Noach and Kettler looked disgusted.

"How do you expect to get around all these difficulties, Murdock?"

"With the help of this boy fakir we captured."

"What kin he do?"

"Don't you see he's got an uncommonly honest face considerin' the business he's in."

"What of it?"

"I expect to gain admittance to that cabin through him."

"How are you goin' to work it?"

"While we stand in the background, he will go to the door with a tale of woe about bein' caught by the tide among the rocks and the impossibility of returnin' to San Bruno afore mornin'. He'll ask for shelter."

"Maybe he won't get it. The miser will have his suspicions."

"We've got to chance that. If we can only manage to get old Scraggs to open his door, no matter how little, we'll be able to force an entrance."

"Suppose this young chap should give us away at the last moment?"

"Not much fear of that, for I shall hold my revolver in my hand ready to blow his brains out at the first sign of treachery on his part."

"If he does the right thing you're goin' to give him a share of the swag, are you?"

"Yes. That'll make him one of us and prevent him from peachin' afterward."

"How much are you goin' to allow him?"

"That depends on the amount of the haul. If we get ten thousand dollars or more we can give him five hundred. He won't know how much we get, and that'll be a lot of money in his pocket. He can go his way then, and we'll go ours. He'd be a fool to lose such a chance, when he'll never be suspected of a hand in the game."

"When do we start?" asked Noach.

"Oh, there ain't no hurry. The tide won't be low enough for us to get around the point until midnight. San Bruno is only six miles away by a short cut through the range, so we've time enough to take things easy."

"The boy'll ride his own nag, eh?" said Kettler. "We must put a blanket on her for a saddle."

"If this thing pans out well we kin go back to Arizona where we come from and live on the fat of the land."

"That suits this chicken all right," said Noach, with a cheerful grin. "Here's hopin' it turns out to be a gold mine," and the ruffian raised his whisky flask to his lips and took a long pull. The others followed suit, and they gradually waxed quite merry over the prospect of securing the hidden wealth of miser Matthew Scraggs.

Paul had heard every word almost that escaped their lips, notwithstanding that they spoke kind of low. But the air was clear and still, and sound carried further than people would generally have supposed. Toby had fallen asleep with his head against the wall, and on this occasion he wasn't snoring. The rascals smoked, drank and talked on for an hour, then Murdock announced that it was time they set off. Accordingly the horses were saddled, Paul's mare being provided with an army blanket tied about her middle. Paul was called out and the door again secured on the sleeping Toby. Then the party started off, Paul being compelled to ride alongside of Murdock. After passing through the defile they set off on a trot toward San Bruno. There was no moon that night, and the sky was somewhat overcast, which was favorable to the designs of the rascals. While yet more than a mile away they caught sight of the distant lights of the town that lay upon one corner of San Bruno Bay, under the shelter of a heavy jutting point of land. It was for the opposite side of the small bay that the bandits headed their animals. Here lived the hermit-miser, as he was called, in a strongly-built cabin of one story, perched in an almost inaccessible spot among the rocks of the shore. It could be reached only at low tide, and then by one path alone, so narrow that a single determined man, sheltered among the rocks, could almost have held a regiment at bay. Matthew Scraggs discouraged visitors, and consequently he was seldom if ever bothered with any. Rumor said he was the possessor of wealth, which he hoarded merely for the pleasure of counting it over and over for his own satisfaction. Rumor is more often a liar than not, but in this case Rumor told the truth. Old man Scraggs was wealthy, and his riches had come to him from the sea. He had been a firsherman in his time, and made a rather precarious living at the business. But one night there was a terrible gale off the coast, a vessel in the Australian trade came ashore among the rocks. All hands were lost, but the best part of the ship was found high and dry in a sandy bit of the shore by Matthew Scraggs next morning. Thereafter it was remarked that old man Scraggs worked no more on the blue waters of the Pacific, and yet he always seemed to have plenty of money to provide for the simple wants of himself and his little niece. He ceased to visit San Bruno except when necessity compelled him to, and people believing he had unexpectedly come into possession of considerable money nicknamed him the hermit-miser.

CHAPTER V.—The Springing of a Trap.

The bandits, with the unwilling accomplice, arrived on the beach an hour in advance of low tide,

and they had to wait the full sixty minutes before they could traverse the narrow patch of shore left uncovered twice a day for a short time and thus reach the little cove where the miser's habitation was to be found. Securing the horses in a safe spot they cautiously began the ascent of the rocky path leading to the door of the cabin. A door and two windows locked seaward, but the windows were so small that no one could have forced a way through them. The door was also small and stout, and heavily barricaded on the inside. A dim light was reflected through one of the windows, which showed that, late as it was, the old man had not yet retired to rest.

"Countin' his money, p'haps," grinned Noach in a low voice.

"We'll save him that trouble after this," replied Murdock, with grim humor.

"A feller that don't spend his cash hain't no right to have any," chipped in Kettler. "If everybody hoarded up his wealth there wouldn't be none in circulation."

"Now, young feller, come here till I give you your lesson," said Murdock to Paul.

He proceeded to tell the boy what was expected of him.

"Remember, I shall be close behind you, watchin' everythin' you say and do, so don't try to play any game on us if you value your life, for it won't take more'n a brace of shakes to put a ball into your head if I suspect you tryin' on any kind of crooked business. As I told you afore, if this thing pans out you'll come in for your share of the winnin's with the rest of us, and then you kin light out for 'Frisco, or any other place, with more money in your clothes than you'd make as a travelin' fakir."

Much against his will, Paul advanced to the door of the cabin and knocked. No notice being taken of the summons, he knocked again, louder than before. As there was still no stir inside of the house, he thumped on the door for the third time.

The narrow window close at hand was opened and the thin voice of an old man inquired who was there, and what was wanted.

"I'm a boy," replied Paul. "I'd like shelter for the night."

"What are you doing here at this time of night?" asked the old man, suspiciously.

"Drifted into this cove in a leaky boat that went down as soon as I stepped out on the rocks," replied Paul, feeling the cold nose of a revolver under his ear.

"Do you live in San Bruno?"

"Say yes," whispered Murdock.

"Yes," answered Paul.

"Is the tide up at the point?"

"Yes."

"What is your name?"

"Paul Scott."

"Are you alone?"

"Yes," said Paul, as he felt the touch of the cold steel again.

There was silence for a moment or two, as if the old man was considering the advisability of permitting the youth to enter the cabin.

Paul hoped that he would refuse, for he despised himself for being a party to this cruel deception, and yet what else could he do?

These three bandits were desperate rascals, bent on robbing this old man, and if he (Paul) in

any way disarranged their plans he felt certain they would shoot him down without the least mercy. He was simply acting upon the old adage that self-preservation is the first law of nature, hoping that something would turn up later on by which he could redeem his conduct at this stage of the game.

"Come to the door," said the old man at length.

Paul heard Old Scraggs unbarring the entrance. Presently the door swung inward a few inches, and then stopped, held thus by a stout chain. A lamp was brought to the crack so that its light fell full upon Paul's face. The old recluse was studying the boy's features, and perhaps looking beyond him for signs of a second person in the background. Murdock, however, was foxy enough to keep well in the shade against the wall of the building, while Noach and Kettler held themselves in readiness for an instant dash forward. Matthew Scraggs, seemingly reassured, returned the lamp to the table, let down the chain and opened the door.

"Come in," he said. "You may stay here till morning."

As Paul stepped forward, Murdock sprang to the door, shoved the boy in ahead of him and seized the old man by the arm. Noach and Kettler followed close upon his heels. Matthew Scraggs uttered a shrill cry of terror, which Noach cut off by grasping him by the throat and squeezing his windpipe.

"Tie the old dotard to yonder post," exclaimed Murdock to Kettler, and that rascal immediately seized Scraggs and dragged him over to the end of the room.

As Murdock glanced around the place, which was but meagerly furnished, his gaze lighted on a heavy brass-bound chest which stood beside the table. He pounced upon it like a vulture swoops upon a fowl. The key was in the lock, and giving it a quick turn, he threw up the cover, revealing a glittering display of gold and silver coin, all carefully arranged in piles. The ruffian's eyes blazed with greed. A package of documents lay on top of the gold, and with an impatient wave of his big hand, Murdock swept it to the floor, carrying with it a score of golden coins that jingled and rolled about on the boards before they came to a rest.

Noach, looking over Murdock's shoulder, was fairly amazed at the amount of wealth which had so easily fallen into their hands.

"I was right," he chuckled, avariciously. "The old chap was countin' his coin. There must be thousands of dollars in that box."

"There's enough to keep us in rhino for a long time," said Murdock, exultantly, running his fingers through the heaps of money, and letting the coins slip like water through his fingers.

"Who'd have thought the old hermit had so much!" said Noach. "No wonder he was called a miser. All hands put on your masks."

This was done, an extra one being given to Paul.

"We'll put it into circulation again," laughed Murdock.

"You kin bet we will," cried Noach, eagerly.

"Go down into the cove where our horses are tied and bring up the saddle bags."

"All right, cap; but I'd like a drink first," his eyes resting on the row of jugs which stood on a

near-by shelf. "There seems to be lickor to burn in them demijohns yonder."

Murdock's gaze followed the wave of Noach's arm, and his eyes brightened at the anticipation of the treat in store for them.

"Right you are," replied the leader of the enterprise. "Here, Paul Scott," he cried, turning to the lad, who was leaning against the dresser behind the table. "See what kind of stuff is in those jugs on that shelf."

Paul took the three demijohns down, one by one, and removing the stoppers smelt of the contents of each in turn. Two of the jugs held gin, but very little was left in either. The third was half-full of whisky. Suddenly an idea came into his head, and he glanced around to see if either of the rascals was watching him. They were not. Their attention was altogether absorbed in the contemplation of the piles of gold and silver coin in the box. The other ruffian was still engaged in tying up the hermit-miser. Deftly Paul inserted his hand into an inner pocket, drew forth the bottle of laudanum he had been carrying since he and Toby left Los Angeles, and emptied its entire contents into the whisky jug and shook it up. He replaced the jugs in their former position and returned to Murdock to report the character of their contents. Having secured Matthew Scraggs to a post in the rear of the room, the ruffians ordered Paul to bring forward the demijohns of liquor from the shelf in the corner. Then they proceeded to make merry over their haul. Murdock offered Paul a drink of the gin, which they wouldn't touch as long as the whisky lasted, but the boy said he was not accustomed to strong drink, and retired to a stool under the shelf, whence he watched the rascals narrowly.

Poor old Scraggs, bound hand and foot to the post, was taking on dreadfully over the threatened loss of his money. Occasionally he glanced at Paul with a look so full of agonized reproach that the boy experienced a spasm of remorse for the part he had acted in the affair, even though he had been driven to do it at the point of a revolver.

"Maybe I'll be able yet to undo the evil I have brought down on this poor old man," he mused. "If there is only enough of laudanum in that whisky to stupefy them, all will be well; otherwise—well, what's the use of worrying? A very short time will tell how this matter is going to end."

At this point of his reflections a door beside the dresser began slowly to open, and as the boy's eyes happened to be on it at the moment, he stared, as it moved on its hinges, with great surprise.

Suddenly a face—the started countenance of a young and beautiful girl—filled the opening, and her eyes roamed in acute dismay upon the intruders who were making so free with the house. Paul gazed at this lovely apparition with eyes of wonder. Was this the old man's niece that he had heard Murdock speak about?

CHAPTER VI.—A Thrilling Climax.

As the girl's eyes wandered about the room they finally rested on Paul's face, and she realized that he was observing her. A look of dread flew into her beautiful face and she looked as if she was about to faint away. Paul tried to reassure her by placing one of his fingers to his lips and then

pointing at the carousing ruffians. Instinctively she seemed to understand that the boy was not an enemy, and a pleading look came into her eyes, as if appealing to him to do something in behalf of her unfortunate uncle. Paul nodded to her, and made a motion for her to retire, as he feared if the scoundrels discovered her presence it would complicate matters.

She appeared to catch his meaning and withdrew, closing the door after her. As the whisky circulated from hand to hand the three ruffians grew more and more uproarious in their conduct. They seemed to forget everything for the moment but the enjoyment of drink. The drug was certainly having effect upon them, but to what extent Paul could not tell. Finally Murdock staggered to his feet and drawing his ugly-looking revolver fired it into the ceiling. The other two immediately imitated his example, with a roar of mirth.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Paul, starting up in dismay. "This is more than I figured on. I'm afraid somebody will get hurt."

After firing a couple of shots into the roof of the cabin, Murdock's rum-crazed brain suggested a fresh freak. He aimed his weapon straight at the helpless old miser. As he pulled the trigger a sharp, whip-like report came from the door behind him, and he staggered and lurched toward where Paul stood, his revolver flying over to within a foot of the boy. Paul glanced in a startled way at the door and saw the girl standing in the opening with a smoking rifle in her hand. She had been just in time to save her uncle's life, for the rascal's aim was disarranged and the bullet flew wide of the post. Murdock lay squirming on the carpetless floor, his fingers working convulsively and the froth gathering about his mouth. Noach and Kettler started to their feet with terrible oaths on their lips. But the effect of the laudanum was now overpowering their senses, and they could hardly see. Still they could perceive that the shot which had struck their leader down came from behind, and their glazing eyes rested upon the girl with a vengeful rage.

Both raised their revolvers to shoot her down. Paul, observing her danger, sprang forward, seized Murdock's weapon and cocking it quickly fired at Noach. The ball struck the butt of his revolver and glancing off hit Kettler in the mouth. The pistols of both the rascal's exploded harmlessly, Noach's dropping to the floor. Kettler clapped one of his hands to his mouth with a hoarse yell of rage and pain, and his glittering eyes rested on the belligerent attitude assumed by the boy. He tried to cover Paul with his weapon, but his hand trembled and wobbled so that it was impossible for him to take aim, and when he pulled the trigger the ball hit the edge of the ceiling. The girl stepped resolutely into the room now and brought the rifle to bear on Noach, who was trying ineffectually to hold himself upright.

"Throw down your gun!" ordered Paul, advancing on Kettler, "and throw up your hands!"

The pistol slipped away from his nerveless grasp, but he could not throw up his arms. With an insane look of baffled fury in his eyes the ruffian collapsed against his chair, which went

down under his weight, and he lay struggling for a moment on the floor until he relapsed into unconsciousness. As for Noach, the only remaining scoundrel they had to deal with, he, without being ordered, threw up his arms under the mute persuasion of the pointed rifle. He remained in that attitude but for a brief interval, his eyes rolling in their sockets, and his body leaning heavily against the table, then he suddenly collapsed as his feet gave way beneath him, and he lay an unconscious heap on the floor.

Murdock was also motionless by this time, but his labored breathing showed that he was not dead, but had yielded to the insidious influence of the laudanum. The girl dropped the rifle and ran to her uncle, who had been a half stupefied witness of the exciting wind-up. Paul stepped forward, laid Murdock's revolver on the table, stooped over Noach and drew from its sheath his glittering bowie-knife. With this in his hand he stepped up to Matthew Scraggs and quickly released him from his bonds. Then he took off his mask. The old man regarded him with a bewildered expression, the girl with a look of gratitude.

"I thank you for saving us from those dreadful men," she said, earnestly, as she took Paul's hand in her and raised it to her lips. "You are a brave boy. But how came you to be here with——"

She paused in some embarrassment, as though the situation was not clear to her.

"You deceived me at the door, boy," said Matthew Scraggs, in trembling tones. "You said you were alone, and all the time these villains were with you, and only obtained entrance because I put faith in your honest face. Yet you have now taken sides against them. I do not understand what it all means."

"It means that I was forced to act as I did against my will. Those ruffians had me in their power. I was their prisoner, and they used me to deceive you. When I answered your questions I did so with the cold muzzle of a revolver pressed against my ear. I told you untruths because it was that or death to me. I had to do as I was told or take the consequences. I hope you will forgive me, for I have since done my best to save you. I doctored that whisky with laudanum that I fortunately had in my pocket. And I shot at the two rascals who were trying to get back at this young lady for her nervy act of shooting down their leader."

"I believe you, for your actions speak for themselves and there is an honest ring in your voice," said the old man. "They would have robbed, perhaps killed me, but for you. What is your name?"

"Paul Scott."

"Ah, yes; you told me so at the door before I admitted you. You are a stranger in these parts, are you not?"

"Yes. I am touring Southern California selling patent medicine."

"How came you to be in the hands, of these men?"

"I and my companion left San Luis at noon to-day, or rather yesterday, in our wagon, for San Bruno, the village yonder on the bay. We were overtaken and held up on the road by those ruffians, who took a small sum of money from me,

all they could find. Then they carried us, wagon and all, to their retreat in the mountain range a few miles back of this place. The wagon and my companion are still there. They had already planned this attack on you. They knew that it would be difficult to gain admission to this cabin openly. So they made use of me to further their purpose, hoping the stratagem would work. It did, but I think the result shows that after all it was fortunate for you that they brought me along. If you will get some rope we will bind these fellows, and later on we can deliver them over to the authorities at San Bruno. They are desperate villains, and from what I heard about them in San Luis, I guess they have been terrorizing the district. They are now in a fair way to be punished for their misdeeds."

"Heaven be praised!" cried the old man, who had now recovered his self-possession. "You are a brave and sturdy youth, and I thank you once more. You shall stay with us to-night. Indeed, you have no alternative, if the tide be up, as I suppose it is now, for it must have been low when you and these men came here, and that is much more than an hour ago. I will get the rope and help you bind the villains. But they must be carried outside afterward. I could not rest knowing they were within these walls where my money is."

He rushed to the open chest at once, flung himself down before the box and threw his arms protectingly about his wealth. Then with feverish haste he gathered up the scattered gold pieces from the floor, returned them to the box, together with the bundle of papers, slammed down the lid, locked it, and put the key in his pocket. After that he went for the rope.

"I must say that you are a brave girl," said Paul, looking at the miser's niece admiringly. "I guess you save your uncle's life by shooting that drink-crazed scoundrel."

She blushed a little and looked down.

"What is your name?" he asked her.

"Suzanne Norwood," she answered, softly.

"It is a pretty name. Almost as pretty as——"

He paused abruptly.

He was going to say "Almost as pretty as yourself," but thought he might offend her.

She blushed rosily as if she surmised what he had thought of saying. Then Matthew Scraggs returned to the room with a lot of rope, with which they bound the rascals hand and foot with great care. Without bothering to find out how badly Murdock was wounded they carried the three unconscious ruffians outside and left them stretched upon the ground under the shelter of a huge overhanging rock. The door was then chained and barred once more, Scraggs, refusing assistance, dragged his precious box into an inner room, and Paul was handed a blanket on which to lie for the rest of the night.

It was broad daylight when Paul awoke. Matthew Scraggs was outside examining the forms of the bandits. Scraggs came forward to the boy and bade him a "Good-morning." In a short while the cherry voice of Suzanne was heard calling them to breakfast. At the table the subject of the girl's shooting again came up, and Paul learned from her own lips what a marvel she was in the way of hitting anything she shot

at. Scraggs then said she had often shot pebbles from his hand. Paul believed it.

After breakfast the girl drew a rocket from a closet and said she was going to signal the town. They went outside, where she set off the rocket.

"There," she said, "that will bring a dozen men from the town to see what is the matter."

In the course of an hour several men were seen coming around the point on horseback. Leaving their horses in the cover, they came to the house on foot. When they reached there the old hermit took them to the bound forms of the villains and explained all that had happened.

The men from San Bruno tied the rascals on their horses, and after telling Scraggs, Suzanne and Paul to follow at one o'clock the next day to San Luis to testify against them, they rode off.

Paul made the old man and his niece good-by shortly after, after promising to see them at San Luis the next day. The boy immediately set out for the mountain range.

CHAPTER VII.—The Tribulations of Toby.

Paul made all the haste he could to get back to the bandit's retreat in the hills, for he knew that Toby on awakening and finding himself alone in the abode house, bound hand and foot as he was would be badly broken up. Although there was plenty of food in the place, the fat boy would be unable to get at it, and thus the gnawing of hunger would be added to Toby's other troubles. But to find the narrow defile in the mountains was not such a simple matter as Paul had reckoned it. He had narrowly observed certain landmarks the night before, when he was forced to accompany Murdock and his companions to San Bruno Bay, and consequently he believed that he would have no great difficulty in retracing his route to the defile; but in daylight things looked much different, the landscape was less contracted, and therefore Paul, in spite of his sharp eyes, found himself all at sea.

"This is tough," he muttered. "Here it is all of twelve o'clock. I've been roaming up and down these byways in the hills and I can't, to save my life find that defile. Those bandits hit upon a pretty secret spot for their headquarters, I am bound to say. Poor Toby! I guess he thinks by this time that he's been left to die of starvation in that old house."

Paul was getting well-nigh desperate, and the time of day was two in the afternoon, when he stumbled right on the defile at last.

"Thank heaven! I've found it. It's like the answer to a Chinese puzzle, upon my word it is."

He felt immensely relieved as he directed the mare into the defile, and rode along its serpentine course, bordered by lofty peaks and crags, partially covered with verdure, until he emerged into the amphitheater beyond and saw the dirty adobe house right before him.

"Get up, Anna Maria," he cried to the mare, as soon as he felt the soft ground under the animal's feet. "You'll have a rest and chance to eat your dinner in a moment or two."

The tired horse pricked up her ears and broke into a smart trot that soon carried Paul to the door of the house, before which the van stood as

it was left the afternoon before. Paul quickly dismounted, removed the blanket which had served for a saddle, and turned the animal loose. Then he entered the house. He unshipped the fastening that secured the door of the inner room and faced the disconsolate Toby, who was by this time reduced to the depths of despair.

"Oh, dear; oh, dear!" exclaimed Toby, two big tears stealing down his fat cheeks. "Wherever have you been so long? I'm most starved. My stomach feels like it had caved it for want of something to hold the sides up. These cords have made my wrists and ankles so numb that I don't believe I shall ever get feeling into them any more. Did those rascals come back with you, or did you get away from them?"

"Those rascals are in jail long before this," replied Paul, as he cut the cords with the bowie-knife which formerly belonged to Noach and which he had retained, together with Murdock's revolver.

"In jail! Glory hallelujah!" piped Toby, as he tried to stand up.

He fell back in a heap on the floor, for there was no power in his feet to sustain his weight. You might have struck his digits with a club at that moment that he wouldn't have felt the blow. His limbs from the knees down were "asleep" by reason of the partial stoppage of blood circulation.

"Give me a drink of water and something to eat," he begged.

Paul hastened to fetch a jug of water from a nearby spring, and Toby drank about a quart before he removed the jug from his lips.

"Here's a fistful of crackers to chew on till I can get dinner ready," said Paul, handing his companion about a dozen soda crackers.

Toby attacked them ravenously. Paul started a fire in the little iron stove in the main room, and while the water was boiling for the coffee he washed the dirty dishes left from the night before. Having made the coffee, Paul fried a big mess of eggs and bacon, and spread out the dishes on the table in readiness to serve the meal up as soon as it was ready, for he guessed the smell of the cookery was setting Toby wild inside. Before dinner was quite ready Toby's lower limbs recovered their usefulness, and he came into the outer room with a famished look on his chubby face.

"Are you hungry?" grinned Paul, giving the pan a shake that started the thin slices of potatoes sizzling again.

"Oh, my, don't mention it," groaned the fat boy, licking his chops at the sight of the food. "I could eat an elephant."

"It's a wonder all that fat you've got on your bones wouldn't stand by you in an emergency like this. You oughtn't to be real hungry for a week."

"Don't you believe it, Paul Scott. My stomach is so empty I can hear it rattle like a bag of bones."

"If I was you I'd get a new stomach," snickered Paul. "Or serve a dispossession notice on that wolf that's inside of you. Your insides give you more trouble than anybody I've ever heard tell of."

"It ain't my fault. I didn't make my stomach."

"I know you didn't. But you ought to educate it."

"Educate it! What do you mean by that?" asked the fat boy wonderingly.

"You pamper it too much. When it hankers for pie, as it always seems to be doing, you're not satisfied till you swallow a whole one down to the last morsel of crust. That's where you make a mistake."

"But I can't live without pie," objected Toby, dismally. "Pie is the finest thing made. Just think of a nice, fat, juicy pie! Oh, my! What did you speak about it for? It makes my mouth water to think of all I've ate."

"Then don't think of them. Sit up to the table and try some of this bacon and eggs, with fried potatoes, and a loaf of white bread. Those rascals laid in a good supply of eatables, and drinkables, too," as he glanced at a row of yet unopened whisky flasks which stood on a shelf in a corner.

Toby needed no second invitation to dinner, and the way he went at the food was a caution.

"You seem to be laying in a week's supply so as to be sure you'll have enough," chuckled Paul, who was pretty hungry himself.

Toby was too busy to make any answer.

"Here's a cup of coffee," said Paul. "Don't choke yourself, now."

Nothing more was said until everything on the table had vanished from view, including the entire contents of the coffee pot.

"Now, we'll take a short rest and then go on to San Bruno," said Paul.

Toby looked the picture of contentment as he reclined on the grass in the afternoon sunshine and listened while his companion recounted the events through which he had passed since he had been separated from the fat boy.

"Ain't I glad to know those chaps are in the calaboose," said Toby. "Especially that villain who took pleasure in abusing me. I wish they'd tie him to a post and let me tickle his legs with a whip-lash. Wouldn't I just lay it on till he danced? Oh, no; of course not."

"We've got to return to San Luis to-morrow to testify against them," said Paul.

"I'll tell the judge how that fellow treated me. I hope he'll get forty years at least."

"Forty years!" snickered Paul. "Why don't you say life and be done with it?"

"He ought to be sent up for life, and the other two get thirty years apiece."

"They'll get all that's coming to them, I guess."

Paul got up and went to the wagon, let down the back and got inside.

"Look at those mattresses," he said, throwing the lot out on the ground. "Noach hacked them all to pieces in his search for my money."

"They're ruined," replied Toby.

"I believe half my supply of cough mixture is gone to smash," said Paul, bringing out one of the boxes.

He found and threw away more than a dozen broken bottles of the Elixir of Life, and upon examining a second box he found as many more damaged bottles of the stuff. A third box had not suffered, and only one bottle was discovered to be broken in the fourth and last box. Paul then replaced their clothes and other personal belonging in the trunk, and cleaned out and tidied up the inside of the van as best he could. Then he

went after the mare and harnessed her to the shafts again.

"Now we'll start on, Toby," he said.

The fat boy, before he got up on the seat, entered the house and took possession of what remained of the bag of crackers, which he stuffed into his pockets.

"Get up, Anna Maria," chirruped Paul, and the outfit started for San Bruno.

CHAPTER VIII.—In the Hands of the Enemy.

Paul, Toby and the covered wagon reached San Bruno some time before dark, and stopped in front of the smaller of the two hotels in the place, while the boys went in and had their supper. Subsequently Paul drove the van to the corner of two of the principal streets, and after attracting a crowd by their music, the lad started in to sell his patent remedies. He drove a brisk trade until buyers got scarce, and then he closed up for the night and drove off into the suburbs, where, after tethering Anna Maria, the two boys turned in on a couple of new mattresses which Paul had purchased. Murdock and his companions had been committed to the town lock-up pending their transfer to San Luis, the county seat, where they would be tried. The San Bruno jail was a one-story adobe building, with a single barred window and a heavy wooden door reinforced with stout iron bands.

It was plenty strong enough to hold ordinary malefactors, and no one had ever been known to escape from it. When the jailer locked the big door on the three bandits he was satisfied they were secure until they should be wanted. They had been searched after the usual fashion, and everything found upon them taken into the jailer's office next door. There were some things on their persons that were not taken, because the search was not thorough enough. Each of the ruffians had concealed in his trousers a pair of fine, highly tempered files, which they had provided for just such an emergency as the present. When the jailer carried in their supper to them, and a blanket for each to lie upon through the night, he was perfectly assured that he would find them there in the morning. When he returned in the morning with their breakfast the adobe jail was empty.

The three stout bars at the window had been sawed away, and that showed how they had made their escape. The jailer was certain they had had assistance from the outside, for how could they saw through those bars without the necessary tools? Which went to prove that he didn't know everything. However, they were gone, and the jailer had a bad quarter of an hour trying to explain to the justice that he wasn't to blame for their escape. A posse of armed citizens was organized to scour the range after them, and as it was known that Paul Scott, the "medicine man," knew where their retreat was, he was persuaded to accompany the pursuers. Toby Titmarsh was left in charge of the wagon and the mare, with a fine large apple pie to keep him company. He ate the pie, and then, feeling drowsy, went to sleep. In the course of a couple of hours the uneasy movement of the wagon woke him up. He was surprised to find the van in motion.

"Paul must have got back, harnessed up and started on the road again," he thought, without taking the trouble to open his eyes, for if there was anything Toby liked, it was to be left alone to slumber as long as he chose.

A fly lighted on his nose and he strove to brush it away with his hand. But he couldn't raise his hand—something seemed to hold both of them down. He opened his eyes quick enough now, and, to his surprise, not to say consternation, he found that his hands were bound by a rope which passed around his waist.

"What's the meaning of this?" he gurgled. "I s'pose Paul had been playing a joke on me."

A very pretty young girl was seated on Paul's mattress, opposite to him. Her hands were bound behind her back, and then secured to one of the hoops which supported the canvas cover of the van, and a piece of cloth covering her mouth was tied at the back of her neck. Toby looked at her with the utmost amazement, and as she was wide awake she returned his stare. The fat boy couldn't understand what this all meant. How came this girl, bound and gagged, in the wagon? Surely Paul Scott wasn't engaged in the kidnapping business. Naturally he turned his eyes to the wagon seat in search of Paul. The flap exposed a hairless countenance he had seen before, and under circumstances not to his liking. It was the face of Noach, the rascal who had amused himself on the previous day at the fat boy's expense.

"Oh, my!" gasped Toby, collapsing against the side of the wagon. "The bandits have got hold of me again. I'm a dead Titmarsh this time for sure. They won't do a thing to me now, I'll bet four bits. Why did I go to sleep? Paul told me to keep my eyes skinned. If I had done as he ordered me to I might have escaped this awful situation. Oh!"

The groan Toby uttered reached Noach's ears, and he thrust his ugly countenance into the wagon.

"You've woke up, have you, you bundle of fat?" he chuckled. "Well, don't let me hear another sound from you until further notice, or I'll go in there and tickle your ribs with my whip."

Satisfied he had terrified his stout prisoner, he resumed a conversation he was carrying on with Kettler, who shared the seat with him. Toby turned his attention once more to the girl opposite. It was evident now to him that the bandits had made her a prisoner for some purpose, and he felt sorry for her. She put him in mind of Paul's description of Suzanne Norwood, the hermit-miser's niece—the girl who could shoot pebbles and matches out a person's hand at thirty feet. It was too bad this girl was gagged, for it would relieve the monotony of his position if they could only talk together. Under the circumstances that seemed to be impossible. Finally, after they had looked at each other for some time, Toby thought he'd speak to her anyway.

"You're a prisoner, ain't you?" he asked in a low voice, fearful that Noach might overhear him and come in and execute his threat.

The girl nodded.

"Did the bandits carry you off from San Bruno?"

She nodded again.

"You don't know where these men are carrying us to, do you?"

She shook her head.

"They ran off with this wagon while I was asleep. This van belongs to Paul Scott and——"

She nodded her head energetically.

"I wonder what she means by that?" thought Toby, looking at her closely. "She nodded her head when I said Paul Scott. She can't know him. How could she? You don't know Paul Scott?" he asked her questioningly.

She nodded.

"You do know him?" in surprise.

Another positive nod.

"It can't be that you are Suzanne, the hermit's niece?" he asked again, as the possibility of the thing occurred to him.

She nodded.

"Are you the girl that can hit a flying pebble everything with a rifle ball?" he continued, regarding her with a fresh and admiring interest.

She nodded, and seemed to smile.

"Caesar's ghost!" he ejaculated. "And you shot that man Murdock, the leader of the three bandits?"

Another nod from the girl.

"And they've kidnapped you to get square with you, I suppose."

Suzanne, for it was indeed she, made no answer to this—probably because she could not speak and tell Toby that the real reason why she had been carried off by these rascals was because they hoped, with her as a hostage, to make terms with the old hermit, involving the transfer to them of most of his wealth in return for her liberty. This was the truth, and Suzanne had easily guessed it. From the rough movements of the wagon Toby judged they were somewhere among the hills, and he wondered if the ruffians were returning to the adobe house behind the defile in the range. He also wondered what Paul would do when he came back to San Bruno and found himself and the horse and wagon missing. Surely the disappearance of Suzanne would result in a search party being sent out to rescue her, and then he, too, would be saved. At this point in his reflections the wagon came to a rest in the middle of a shallow stream to allow the horse to take a drink. Noach handed the reins to Kettler and to Toby's dismay turned around and came into the wagon.

"Now, young lady," he said to Suzanne, "I'll relieve you of that gag."

Thus speaking, he took the cloth from her mouth. She felt immensely relieved, but she didn't thank him just the same. He cast a sardonic look at Toby and then returned to his seat. The wagon moved on, and thereafter the road became more rough, and the joltings more frequent. Toby and Suzanne were now able to converse together. She told him that she and her uncle had arranged to go by the stage to San Luis to attend the examination of the three bandits. She had left the cove ahead of Matthew Scraggs, and was walking along the shore close to the outlying houses of San Bruno, when she was suddenly set upon by the very rascals she supposed to be safely in prison at San Luis.

They gagged and bound her before she had recovered from the surprise of the attack, and carrying her up the road they came upon the van,

with the horse tethered close by, and Toby asleep inside.

"They lifted me into the wagon," she went on to say, "bound you as you slept, put the animal into the shafts and drove off, but in what direction I have not the least idea."

"Didn't any one see them kidnap you?" asked Toby. "I don't see how they could do it in broad daylight."

"If any one saw them carry me off they didn't interfere."

"I wonder what they intend to do with us?" said Toby, apprehensively.

"I am sure they mean to hold me a prisoner until I am either rescued or my uncle pays them a large sum of money to let me go."

"Maybe Paul Scott would pay them something to let me go, too," said Toby, hopefully.

"It's more likely," she said, leaning over and whispering, "that he'll head a party of San Bruno people to run these bandits down and take us away from them. He's a brave boy, and a smart boy, too, and that's just what I think he'll do."

Toby sincerely hoped that Paul was already on their trail, for a sensation of discomfort in the region of his stomach told him that he was growing hungry again.

CHAPTER IX.—Paul Starts to the Rescue of Suzanne and Toby.

If the bandits were going back to their retreat in the range, they were taking a different and much longer route than the customary one. Then again there were only two of them—Murdock was missing. The truth of the matter was, after giving directions to Noach, he had remained in the neighborhood of San Bruno for two reasons; the first was to communicate his intentions and terms to Matthew Scraggs; the other, to find out if the people of the town were going to make any great efforts to try and recapture him and his two associates. Immediately after the abduction of Suzanne, Murdock, with a dollar in his pocket which Noach had taken from Toby's pocket, entered a small drug store which sold stationery, and buying a sheet of paper and an envelope, wrote a note in his peculiar style to Matthew Scraggs, in which he stated that his niece Suzanne was now in their hands, and that he would give Scraggs the chance to ransom her for the sum of \$20,000.

"I'll give you a week to make up your mind," the note went on. "If within that time you do not bring the sum mentioned in gold to the spindle rock at the foot of the twin peaks near the road to San Luis, and come alone, you will never see the girl again, as I shall shoot her in revenge for the wound she gave me in your cabin. If you comply with this demand, and bring the money in the manner stated, then the girl will be allowed to go back with you unharmed. If you think you can save the girl by sending a posse to search the range for us, why, try it; but remember that in that case the girl's fate will lie at your door."

"I guess that will bring him to the scratch," muttered Murdock, as he sealed the envelope and addressed it to Matthew Scraggs.

Then he walked boldly up the main street of

the town, entered the small post-office, bought a stamp and mailed the letter. Before dark the posse, with the deputy sheriff and Paul Scott at their head, which had been scouring the range since morning to find some trace of the three bandits, returned unsuccessful from their quest. Murdock saw them ride into town, he he smiled sarcastically as they swept by his hiding-place on the outskirts of San Bruno. He followed them into town in the gathering dusk and saw them dismount before the office of the jail, and enter the building. A crowd gathered around the door to hear the news, and Murdock mixed with it without attracting notice. Finally he took advantage of the general attention being concentrated on the office to unhitch the deputy sheriff's fine roan stallion, and walk it down the street a little way.

Then he mounted the animal and rode away from the town to meet his compainos at the appointed rendezvous in the range. There was the dickens to pay when the deputy sheriff missed his horse, with a fine pair of revolvers in the holster. No one had noticed the disappearance of the animal, and so the town official was left completely at sea in the matter. He was mad as a hornet, for he thought one of his friends had played a practical joke on him. But a similar discomfiture awaited Paul Scott when he went to the spot where he had left Toby in charge of the van and the mare. Toby and the outfit were gone, but where it had vanished to no amount of investigation on Paul's part gave the slightest clew. So Paul had to give the matter up for the night and go to the hotel where he and Toby had taken their meals. Next morning Paul started out on a fresh hunt after the wagon. It was not long before a woman, living in the suburbs of the town, told him that she had seen a van such as he described, drawn by a horse answering to the appearance of Anna Maria, driven by a smooth-faced, rough-looking man, with a bearded companion, moving rapidly up the road to the northeast.

"When did you see the wagon, ma'am?" he asked.

"About noon, yesterday," she replied.

"By George!" exclaimed Paul. "I believe those rascals have taken possession of my rig again. They must have been hanging around this neighborhood while we were searching for them in the range. But why should they take the trouble to carry off poor Toby? Possibly to prevent him from giving an alarm. They'll probably dump him out in the wilds somewhere, and let him find his way back to San Bruno as best he can. The rascals! What shall I do now? Without my outfit I'm completely stranded. No use talking, I must follow those scamps, even at the risk of my life. All my money is hid away in that wagon, and I can't afford to be done out of it. I must borrow a good horse and a rifle. I'll run down to the cove and ask Suzanne to loan me her gun. She'll do it, I know. Then as to a horse, I guess I can scare one up when I explain why I want it."

Having decided on his line of action, Paul hurried over to a point, wondering whether the tide was low enough to permit him to walk around to the cove. He found that it was. On his way around the little patch of beach he met

the postmaster's son, who had been sent to deliver Murdock's letter to Matthew Scraggs. Paul had scarcely caught sight of the cabin, perched among the rocks, before he saw the old hermit come out of the door and walk up and down in front of the house like a man who had lost his senses.

"What's the matter with him?" the boy asked himself, as he watched Scraggs apparently tearing his hair and acting like mad. "He must be subject to fits. Well, I don't wonder. The old chap is half dopy, between his money and the solitude of the place. The way he talked yesterday morning about the sea and himself understanding each other is enough to prove he's cracked in his upper story."

Matthew Scraggs paid no attention to the approach of Paul Scott. The boy made his way up the pathway to the cabin and looked in at the door, thinking to see Suzanne, but she wasn't there. Then he walked up to the hermit and spoke to him. The old man stopped and stared wildly at the boy for a moment, then he seemed to recognize him. Paul saw he was greatly agitated, the tears were trickling down his pointed beard, and he was shaking as with the ague. In one trembling hand he held an open letter.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked the boy, much astonished at his strange actions and appearance.

"Suzanne is gone!" cried Scraggs with a burst of grief, which showed how much he was attached to his young relative. "Gone! Gone! Stolen by those villains!"

"Suzanne gone! Stolen! What do you mean?" gasped Paul.

"Read this letter!" exclaimed the hermit, thrusting the paper into the boy's fingers. "Read it, and you will understand all."

Paul read the letter. He was startled by the terms proposed by Murdock.

"I must sacrifice my money to save her!" cried the old man, with a hollow groan, that showed it was like parting with his very life blood to be compelled to give up so much of his cherished wealth.

Yet it was clear, to his credit, that his niece was more to him, when it came to the pinch, than even his darling gold, though it was quite probable he never would recover from the loss of his money.

"Calm yourself, Mr. Scraggs, and let us talk the matter over together. Perhaps something can be done to rescue Suzanne from the clutches of those villains, without you being obliged to yield to their terms."

"No, no!" ejaculated the hermit. "Nothing must be done. He says if I send a posse to search for them her fate will rest at my door. In that case he means to kill her. I cannot lose Suzanne. No, no; I cannot lose her! Better that my gold, which I am saving for her, that she may be rich after I am dead, should go. She must not be hurt."

Paul's respect for the hermit-miser went up several hundred per cent. on hearing him speak in that strain.

"Look here, Mr. Scraggs, don't get so excited. He gives you a week to decide what you will do, and it will take you only a few hours to carry the necessary sum to the spot he has indicated on the road to San Luis. In the meantime, turn this

matter over to me. Those rascals have stolen my horse and wagon, and carried off my companion, and I mean to get my property back if I can. In seeking for my outfit I may come across Suzanne, and I promise you I will attempt her rescue even at the risk of my life. I came over here to borrow her rifle. Will you let me have it?"

"Yes, yes," cried the old man, eagerly. "Do you mean to go out alone?"

"I do. They will be on the lookout for a posse, and not for a lone boy like me. I mean to hunt the range till I get wind of their whereabouts, and then I hope by stratagem to get the better of them."

"You are a brave boy," said Matthew Scraggs, patting him on the shoulder. "I have confidence in you. I will wait six days for you to do something. On the seventh, if you do not return with Suzanne, I will take the gold to the spindle rock near the San Luis road."

"That is just what I was about to propose—that you give me six days to rescue Suzanne. It is settled, then?"

"Yes, yes; it is settled," replied the hermit, feverishly.

"Then get me her rifle and some cartridges, and I will be off before the tide makes me a prisoner in this cove."

Matthew Scraggs hastened into the cabin and soon returned with Suzanne's rifle and her cartridge belt, which was full of ammunition. The gun was a magazine rifle, and six shots could be fired before it was necessary to reload. Paul strapped the belt around his waist under his jacket, where he already carried Murdock's revolver on one side and Noach's bowie on the other. With the rifle in his hand he looked to be prepared for almost any kind of an emergency he was likely to run up against.

Then seizing Matthew Scraggs by the hands, he told him to keep up his courage.

"Depend on it, I will save Suzanne if the thing be possible. Good-by."

He ran lightly down the narrow path to the cove, circled the point through the first flow of the incoming tide, and started for San Bruno to borrow a horse.

CHAPTER X.—Paul Tracks the Bandits to Their New Retreat.

Paul Scott succeeded in procuring a stout young horse, used to mountain travel, and filling a pair of carpet bags with a week's supply of food he set off toward the defile in the hills. He hoped to find the bandits back again in their retreat. He took a roundabout course at a slow pace, for he did not propose to take the chances of entering the little enclosed amphitheater until after dark. There was a beaten track leading well to the north of the defile, and he followed it. About five o'clock he reached the very creek the wagon had crossed the previous afternoon, and as the ground was soft hereabout he noticed the impression of the wheels. His heart gave a jump.

"I guess I've struck the right trail," he breathed. "Some wagon, probably my van, has recently come this way."

For some distance the track was more or less plain, then he lost it over a stretch of hard ground. He went straight on, and by and by saw

the occasional track of the wheels again. They led him around in a semi-circle, and away from the defile.

"I guess they're afraid to go back to their old roosting-ground for a while, at any rate. This track leads right into a wild section of the mountains. Rather rough traveling for a wheeled vehicle, I should think."

It certainly was, as rocks and tree stumps, and other obstructions, abounded.

"They're liable to break an axle over this road unless they're mighty careful."

Darkness came down upon him while he was still following the trail. He then decided to camp where he was for the night. Picketing the horse where he could get at the grass, Paul ate his supper of cold meat and bread, which he washed down with coffee he had brought in a bottle. He sat for an hour with his back against a big rock and figured upon what he should do when he overhauled the rascals. Then wrapping himself in the blanket he carried for that purpose, he was soon fast asleep in the solitude of the range, with the broad canopy of heaven above him and the stars winking down to keep him company. He was up at the first blush of day in the eastern sky, leisurely ate his frugal breakfast, and saddling his animal took up the trail once more.

It was not an easy matter to follow it here, and he was obliged to proceed a good deal by guesswork. But he had a sharp pair of eyes, and being desperately in earnest, he noticed signs showing the late passage of a wagon that he would not otherwise have taken note of. As the day grew apace he saw that the ruffians' trail led around toward the south. In following their tracks he circled a great spur in the range and came into a long and narrow valley between two sections of the mountains. Here a wagon could proceed with tolerable ease and safety, and as the ground was of yielding nature the double wheel track of the van was plainly recognizable. In order to attract less attention in case the rascals might be somewhere on the watch, Paul dismounted and led the animal by the bridle. Thus he crossed the long valley to the further end and there noted that the wagon track led through another defile very similar to the one on the other side of the range.

He followed it with due caution, and it led him into a pocket that had many of the characteristics of the amphitheater where the adobe house was situated. It was very much smaller than the other place, however, being scarcely more than two hundred yards across to a point where a rough pathway led up to a depression among the hills.

Near the center of this pocket Paul saw his van, while Anna Maria and another horse were contentedly nibbling the luxuriant grass close by.

"So I've tracked these rascals to their hiding-place, have I?" he muttered grimly, as he drew back into the shadows of the ravine. "Well, I've done better than I expected in so short a time."

Looking more narrowly toward the wagon, in the hope of seeing either Toby or Suzanne, he made out the forms of two of the three bandits stretched out in the grass under the van, smoking cigars and apparently talking.

"Where is the third man?" mused Paul. "He may be on the watch somewhere about here. I must look out that he does not come on me un-
aware."

He looked furtively back up the defile. There were a score of places where a watcher might lie concealed, and he began to wonder if his approach was already known to the invisible bandit, who he knew to be Noach, as the other two had hair on their faces. Paul stood for half an hour alternately watching the smoking and looking up the defile, but nothing occurred to indicate that he had been seen.

"I must find some place to picket my horse where he will not be seen," said the boy to himself. "Some place on the other side of the valley. I can then come back here and watch these chaps to better advantage. If the rascals only knew my eyes were on them at this moment they wouldn't be taking things so easy."

He led his animal back through the mountain pass, narrowly watching every rock or bit of brush that might conceal a spy, until he reached the valley once more. Then he continued on across the narrow plain till he made out a sequestered nook sheltered by a line of trees. Here he tethered his horse, and here beside a trickling rill he ate his noonday meal, and laid his plans for future action. The day was very warm and the air still. Nature seemed to have gone to sleep under the broiling Southern California sun. Paul recrossed the valley and entered the defile once more. He passed through to the point from which he had previously reconnoitered the pocket, and creeping into a mass of thick vegetation near at hand he felt he was secure from observation. He saw that he had not reached the spot a moment too soon, for one of the two bandits, whom he recognized as Murdock, was slowly walking toward the entrance to the pass.

"I had a narrow escape," thought Paul, his eyes on the man. "Had I come a few moments later we must have met in the defile, and then there would have been something doing. I wonder where he is going?"

Murdock kept right on till he reached the defile, passing within a yard of where Paul was concealed, and then disappeared up the pass.

"I suppose he's gone to take a look up the valley, and see if any one is in sight," mused the boy.

It was a good guess, for this was exactly the errand the bandit was bent on. The other ruffian was stretched out under the wagon as if asleep. Noach was still missing, and Paul would have given something to have known where he was at that moment. At that stage of the game the canvas folds behind the wagon seat were pushed back and the fat countenance of Toby appeared. He looked all around the van as well as he could, and after a moment or two drew back again into the interior.

"I wonder what Toby is up to?" muttered Paul. "Is he planning to make his escape? I'm afraid he isn't smart enough to succeed."

At that moment another face appeared from behind the canvas—the bright and alert face of Suzanne Norwood.

CHAPTER XI.—Suzanne and Toby Get Away From the Bandits.

Paul watched the girl with sparkling eyes. It looked to him as if she and Toby had made up their minds to try and get away from their cap-

tors. Suzanne glanced around just the same as the fat boy had done. Then she stepped lightly over the seat, knelt down and gazed under the wagon. Of course she caught sight of the sleeping Kettler. She drew back and seemed to be considering the situation. Paul saw Toby's face reappear behind her. At length Suzanne sprang to the ground and ducked low in the grass. She waited a moment and then waved her arm for Toby to follow. The fat boy emerged from the van like a baby elephant, and the front of the wagon tipped with his weight as he started to descend backward. He reached the ground all right and dived down beside Suzanne, but he was so large that he put one in mind of an ostrich hiding its head in the sand while the rest of its body was exposed.

Any one looking that way could have seen him. Paul watched the movement with a good deal of interest. They lay in the grass two or three minutes and then Suzanne rose up and looked toward Kettler. He had not stirred. Then she scrutinized the pocket on every side, and seeing nothing stirring she spoke to Toby, who also got up, and they started for the entrance of the defile.

"Suzanne," cried Paul, softly, as she and the fat boy were passing within a few feet of where he lay concealed in the bushes.

The girl gave a little suppressed scream, while Toby exclaimed, "Oh, lor!" and began to shake in his shoes.

"Don't be alarmed, Suzanne. It is I, Paul Scott."

"Oh, Paul!" exclaimed Suzanne, running up to him and catching him by the hands.

"Paul Scott, is it really you?" gurgled Toby, in astonishment.

"Sure thing, Toby," grinned the lad, as he drew Suzanne down into the shelter of the bushes. "Get under cover, Toby."

In a moment they were out of sight.

"It isn't possible that you came out here after us all alone, is it, Paul?" asked Suzanne, laying her hand on his arm. "Surely, some of the San Bruno people came with you?"

"No. I came here all by myself."

"Why were you so reckless? You know these men would think nothing of shooting you down on sight."

"There was a good reason why I could not bring a posse with me."

"What reason? How could you hope to get the better of these desperate rascals yourself?"

"By stratagem. Murdock wrote a letter to your uncle demanding twenty thousand dollars for your ransom. He said that if any attempt was made to capture him and his associates it would at the risk of your life. He gave your uncle a week to consider the matter, and bring the money to a certain spot which he stated. If Mr. Scraggs failed to do so, Murdock threatened to kill you in revenge for the wound you gave him the other night in the cabin."

"Then you have seen my uncle?" she said, in a low voice.

"Yes. I told him that it was better that I should attempt your rescue alone, as these rascals would certainly be on the lookout for a posse, and would take measures to protect themselves

against any attack. Doubtless they had determined to kill you before they would be taken. Now I reasoned that I might possibly be able to track the scoundrels alone without attracting their notice. Your uncle thought well of the plan and agreed not to comply with Murdock's demands until I had had a fair chance to do something to thwart the rascal. So I started out on a borrowed horse yesterday morning, and after some hours I came upon the tracks made by the van. I followed them, and they led me here."

"You took a great risk. How brave you are!" she said, admiringly. "But we ought not to remain here talking," she said, anxiously. "The other two men may come back at any moment. Let us get away at once through the pass."

"No," replied Paul. "Murdock passed through the defile a little while ago. If we went that way now we would be likely to meet him. He is armed and one of us at least might get hurt. We must wait till he comes back."

"And the other man—the one called Noach?" asked Suzanne. "Have you seen him?"

"No. I wish I knew where he was."

"Why, you have my rifle, haven't you?" she remarked in some surprise.

"I have. Perhaps you'd better take it. I have a revolver and a knife."

He persuaded Suzanne to take her weapon, which she knew how to use so well, and unbuckled the cartridge belt.

While they conversed they also did not forget to peer frequently through the interstices of the bushes in order to keep track of anything that transpired in the open space in front. Suddenly Suzanne grasped Paul by the sleeve of his jacket.

"Look," she said. "There is Noach."

Paul and Toby followed with their eyes the direction she pointed, and saw the rascal making his way down the rocks at the further end of the pocket.

"He must have been on the watch at that opening yonder," said Paul.

He came on slowly, as if time and he were on easy terms, and when he reached the wagon he sat down and punched Kettler into wakefulness. They conversed together. Kettler finally got up and looked around, as if in search of Murdock. Not seeing any sign of him he sat down again, and the rascals continued to talk together for perhaps a quarter of an hour. Then Noach rose to his feet, came around to the front of the wagon, stepped up on the seat and looked into the van. Of course he immediately discovered the absence of the prisoners, and sprang down again in a hurry. From the way he addressed his comrade it was evident he was blaming him for lack of vigilance. No time, however, was lost by them in making an effort to recover the fugitives. After glancing sharply all over the grass-covered pocket Noach started for the defile, while Kettler remained beside the wagon on the alert.

"It's too bad that both of them didn't go off through the pass hunting for us," said Paul.

At that moment Toby uttered a loud exclamation of terror, and pointed to Suzanne's feet. A good-sized, dead-looking snake lay coiled there, its flat head poised and gently waving to and fro as if in the act of springing on the girl.

CHAPTER XII.—What Paul Found in the Spur of the Range.

Paul saw Suzanne's danger, and on the spur of the moment he seized his revolver and fired at the snake's head, killing the reptile instantly. The report of the weapon naturally startled Kettler, and drew his attention in that direction. He saw the white smoke rising from the fringe of the bushes and he became greatly excited. His first impression was that the pocket had been invaded by their enemies, and that he had been fired upon, so he hastily jumped behind the shelter of the wagon to get out of range. He felt that his position was desperate, as he had no weapon to defend himself with—the only guns the party possessed being the deputy sheriff's stolen revolvers, now in possession of Murdock and Noach.

"The fat is in the fire now," said Paul, ruefully. "No use staying here any longer. Let's make a break for that rascal and put him out of business while we have the chance. If he has a revolver, and draws it on us don't hesitate to shoot him, Suzanne."

Paul sprang from the bushes, pistol in hand, followed by Suzanne with her rifle ready for instant service, while Toby, being neither armed nor very valliant, followed more leisurely, and with many misgivings as to what was about to happen.

"You go around the other side of the wagon. Suzanne, and cut him off that way while I take him in front," said Paul.

Kettler being caught at a disadvantage threw up his hands when so ordered by Paul.

"Here, Toby," ordered his business associate, "see if you can find some pieces of rope in the wagon to tie this fellow with."

Toby hastened to get the cords which the rascals had used to bind himself and Suzanne. While Paul and Suzanne covered the discomfited scoundrel, the fat boy bound his hands behind his back and tied his legs together. He had scarcely completed the job when Murdock and Noach, who had heard the report of the revolver, came on the scene, weapons in hand. They stopped at the mouth of the defile, to take a hasty survey of the pocket in order to determine the trouble, and it was not many moments before they grew wise to the situation. They recognized Paul Scott at once, and at the same time saw their late prisoners. As there was nothing very formidable in the appearance of these three young people, Murdock and Noach concluded that they could overpower them. So they rushed forward with shouts of triumph, both of them firing at Paul as he stood out in full view. One of the bullets carried away a lock of the boy's hair, and he staggered back and slipped to the ground. Suzanne, with a cry of anger and distress, covered Noach in a twinkling with her rifle and pulled the trigger. Simultaneous with the sharp crack of the weapon the scoundrel threw up his hands, uttered a terrible cry and fell forward on his face. A second report followed an instant later and Murdock went down on the grass like a stricken deer. By that time Paul was picking himself up. Suzanne dropped her rifle and ran to him with the deepest concern on her face.

"Are you hurt?" she asked, with trembling lips.

"Not in the least," he replied, with a reassuring smile. "The ball glanced alongside my head and knocked me out for the moment, but that is all it amounted to."

He walked up to Noach and Murdock and examined them. Each had a streak of blood flowing from a furrow over the left ear. They had been stunned, but not dangerously wounded.

He turned to the girl's side and reported the facts.

"I did not try to kill them," she said. "I could easily have done that. I hit them just as I meant to do."

There was no more rope, so Paul tore one of the blankets into strips and used it to bind Murdock and Noach hand and foot. The three bandits were then hoisted into the van like three sacks of meal, Anna Maria was harnessed to the shafts, and with Toby for driver, and Suzanne sitting by his side, the wagon started off through the defile for the valley beyond, Paul riding behind on the deputy sheriff's stolen horse. After passing through the defile Paul directed Toby to follow him, and he started off ahead for the place where his own animal was picketed. It was well along in the afternoon, and as both Suzanne and Toby were about half famished, for the bandits had secured only a limited quantity of food, Paul called a halt for an early supper, which he supplied from the eatables he had brought with him.

"Eat heartily, Toby," grinned Paul, handing his young associate a couple of meat sandwiches, after he had first waited on Suzanne. "I guess I have enough to fill you up."

"I hope you have," gurgled Toby, between huge bites. "I feel as hollow as a tube. I've eaten scarcely anything since yesterday morning."

"You're a second edition of Oliver Twist, aren't you?" said Paul, producing a couple of additional sandwiches.

Toby had no idea who Oliver Twist was, as he had never read the story, so he merely grinned and bit into his third sandwich. When the meal was ended, Paul mounted his horse, and, leading the other animal, headed the procession up the valley. They reached the upper end of the valley about dark and halted there for the night, the young people, with a blanket apiece, making themselves as comfortable as they could under the shadow of a spur of the hills. Toby and Suzanne were soon asleep, but Paul felt unusually wakeful. He lay on his back, looking up at the brilliant stars, and thought how delightful the old hermit would be when he returned Suzanne to her home on the following day.

"He's a queer old fellow," mused the boy, "but he's got one good streak in him—he's mighty fond of his niece. I wonder how he made all that money he's got in that brass-bound box? There must be thousands of dollars there. It's a fine thing to have plenty of money. A fellow can have anything he wants then. It will take me a good while to make a fortune selling patent medicine. Still, I'm doing pretty well for a chap of my years. I have no right to kick. All the same I wouldn't mind if I could find a gold mine, and branch out as a young multi-millionaire. I think I'd start a pie bakery especialy to provide Toby with enough of his favorite luxury. Dear me, how that boy can eat! If he keeps on he'll burst some day."

or grow so big I'll have to hire him out to a side-show."

He turned over on his side and began listlessly to pile up the pebbles within reach, thinking that before he had finished the operation he would drop asleep. The moon rose over the summit of the range and shone down upon the silent little camp. Presently, as Paul was putting the finishing touches to his pile of stones, something bright in the face of the rock a short distance away attracted his notice.

He got up and walked over to the rock spur on which the rays of the moon shone with a soft brilliancy. That one particular spot reflected a dull radiance different from any other part of the rock. Paul rubbed his hand over it.

"It's a funny piece of rock," he mused. "I'm going to dig it out as a curiosity."

That was easier said than done. With the point of his bowie-knife he dug away at it, and finally quite a chunk of the shiny rock came away in his hand. He examined it in the light of the moon.

"I wonder if that could be real silver ore?" he asked himself, as he turned it over and over in his fingers. "It looks something like the specks I've seen in silver quartz; but this is not quartz, that I can see; it seems a solid lump of silver rock. I dare say there is more of it in that spur. If it's real silver I've accidentally struck a good thing—maybe a bonanza. If it isn't silver, why, then, this hunk hasn't any value. I must get some person who has an expert knowledge of ores to pass judgment on it. If there's anything in this I can easily find this place again."

CHAPTER XIII.—How Paul's Discovery Promises Valuable Results.

Paul was up with the sun next morning, and the first thing he did was to take a look at his prisoners. Murdock and Noach had recovered their senses, and from the vigorous way they showered threats on his head the boy judged they were not much inconvenienced by their wounds.

"We'll make you wish you were never born, you young imp, when we get our hands on you again," snarled Murdock, with a vengeful look in his fierce eyes.

"You won't have that pleasure, I'm thinking," replied Paul, coolly.

Murdock received this speech with a volley of expletives. Paul was disgusted and left them to themselves. After a light breakfast in which the rascals did not participate, as Paul did not care to take the chance of unloosening even one of their hands, the journey to San Bruno was resumed.

Paul picked out an easier route than that taken by the bandits on the way to the heart of the range, and about the middle of the afternoon they came in sight of the town and the great ocean beyond. When they drove up to the office of the jailer alongside of the jail, a crowd immediately collected. He found that the deputy sheriff was absent with a posse on a still hunt for the escaped prisoners. The jailer was the most surprised man in town when Paul notified him that he had the three rascals in the van ready for delivery to him.

"Why, when did you go out after them, and who went with you?"

"I went alone the day before yesterday."

"You went alone! Oh, come now, what are you giving me?" replied the jailer, incredulously.

"I'm giving you nothing but the truth. You know I reported to you that my wagon and my assistant were missing, don't you?"

The man nodded.

"Well, I discovered that the bandits had taken the van, carrying off not only my helper, but Suzanne Norwood, old Matthew Scraggs' niece."

"This is the first I've heard about it."

"Mr. Scraggs did not report the matter for reasons he considered good. However, to continue with the facts, I started off on my own hook to see if I could find any trace of the villains, and I succeeded in tracking them to their new hiding-place."

"You did!" ejaculated the surprised official.

"I did. I hardly expected to do anything with these fellows. My plan was to aid Miss Norwood and my associate to escape at the first chance, when the rascals happened to be off their guard. This scheme missed fire on the lines originally intended, but it led to a fight with the villains, the upshot of which was we captured the three of them, and I am now ready to deliver them to you."

"I hate to say that I doubt your story," replied the jailer, jumping to his feet and calling two of his assistants; "but when I see the rascals with my own eyes I'll be convinced."

In one minute the jailer had evidence enough to banish his disbelief. He was tickled to death at getting his slippery prisoners back again, and you may be sure he lost no time in hustling them back into the prison. After that he took no further chances with them, but posted a guard outside the window until the return of the deputy sheriff from his unsuccessful expedition, when the bandits were taken under a strong guard to San Luis, and lodged in a strong jail. In spite of Murdock's boasting, they did not escape a second time, but being tried and convicted were sent to the State prison for fifteen years apiece. In recognition of Paul's services in achieving their recapture, the town of San Bruno voted him a reward of three hundred dollars, while the county presented him with the standing reward of two thousand for their capture. It was dark, on the day that Paul returned with his prisoners to San Bruno, before the tide was low enough for him to accompany Suzanne back to the cove.

"Poor Uncle Matthew," said Suzanne, as they came in sight of the light burning in the cabin window. "He is suffering a world of anxiety on my account. How happy he'll be to have me back again!"

"It will be something of a surprise to him to see you back so soon," said Paul. "I left him in a hopeful frame of mind, but I have no doubt he has since had misgivings of the ultimate success of my little expedition."

They ascended the path in the rocks and Paul knocked lustily on the door.

"Who is there?" asked the old hermit, after a moment's delay.

"Paul Scott," replied the boy.

The door was quickly unbarred and unchained. As it swung open on its heavy hinges, Paul was surprised to see the great change which had come over Matthew Scraggs in the short time since he saw him last. He seemed to have aged ten years.

His straggling hairs looked whiter than ever, and his deep-set eyes burned like coals of living fire far back under his shaggy, overreaching eyebrows. He looked thinner than ever, for he had scarcely eaten anything to speak of since the morning he received Murdock's letter and understood the peril which threatened Suzanne.

"You are back, Paul Scott," he said in a hollow voice, which had a strangely pathetic ring in it. "You have failed then to find my little sunbeam—my Suzanne. I feared you would not succeed. Those rascals are too clever to be easily outwitted. To-morrow I will take the money to the spindle rock and——"

"You will do nothing of the sort, Mr. Scraggs," replied Paul. "Suzanne is safe."

"Suzanne is safe!" he gasped in a fluttering voice. "Are you telling me the truth, Paul Scott?" he asked with plaintive eagerness.

"Yes."

"Then where is she? Where is my little girl?"

Suzanne, who had been standing back in the shadows while Paul was breaking the news to the old man, could curb her impatience no longer.

"Here, uncle. Here I am, safe and uninjured," and she darted forward and sprang into his arms.

Paul stepped into the cabin after her and closed the door. The old hermit was well nigh overcome by the unexpected reappearance of his niece, whom he loved so dearly, and whose absence under such terrible circumstances had been a sore trial to him. He seemed hardly to believe the evidence of his eyes, and looked at her in a dazed kind of way. But the pressure of her warm lips to his, and the twining hold of her arms around his neck, soon brought conviction to his senses, and he caressed her fondly, and thanked heaven that she had been restored to him.

"And did Paul Scott save you, my little one? Am I to thank him for this great blessing which has come to me to-night?"

"Yes, uncle. He tracked his wagon, in which those bandits carried us off, far into the wilds of the range. His friend Toby was also in the power of those men. We made up our minds to try and escape from them yesterday when we thought we saw a chance. But we surely would have been recaptured but for Paul. He deserves all your thanks, uncle. I shall never forget how good and brave he was to come to my rescue."

The old man at once turned to Paul and expressed his gratitude in heartfelt language.

Paul accepted an invitation to stay there that night. In fact he had no other course, as the tide had by this time cut off the passage around the point. Suzanne immediately started in to prepare supper, which was not very extensive, as the hermit had very little of anything to eat in the cabin.

However, they made the best of the situation, and as the girl was about fagged out, she went to her room as soon as the meal was disposed of. Before Paul spread the blanket which was given him to make a bed of, he thought about the silver-looking stone in his pocket, and drawing it out showed it to Matthew Scraggs. He examined it attentively.

"Where did you find this?" asked the old man finally, in a tone that fairly trembled with eagerness, as he looked into the boy's face.

"In a certain part of the mountains through

which we passed. Do you think it can possibly be real silver?"

"Do I think? Why, Paul Scott, it is silver. A chunk of the pure virgin metal."

"Do you mean that, Mr. Scraggs? Are you certain you are not making a mistake?"

"I am making no mistake. I am thoroughly familiar with metallurgy. This specimen is genuine silver ore. There must be more, tons of it, where you found this. Lose no time, but go back and stake out a claim. Stay, I will go with you and show you how to do it. We must comply with the law, and yet take full advantage of our rights. The discovery is yours, and I will see that so far as my knowledge of surface indications will decide that the cream of this lode shall come to you. After that it is only right that Suzanne and I and your associate should have the preference over strangers, who will flock to the spot as soon as the news of this silver find becomes known. Am I not right?"

"You are, Mr. Scraggs."

Thus the matter was settled, and Paul retired to rest, an excited and happy boy.

CHAPTER XIV.—The Silver Lode.

When Paul awoke next morning and went outside to take a whiff of the bracing sea air he found Matthew Scraggs seated before a flat rock cleaning a mess of fish he had just caught.

"You look as if you had slept well, Paul Scott, in spite of the hardness of your bed," remarked the old man cheerfully.

"Like a top," grinned the boy. "Though I must admit that I dreamed I found a mine of solid silver ore, the like of which no man ever heard of."

"Your dream is likely to come true, for that chunk of virgin silver you showed me last night tells its own story. You said you broke that off from the face of the rock."

"I did, night before last, and I am ready to lead you to the spot and point out the place where I dug it out with my bowie."

"Very well, are you ready to start to-day for that particular spot in the range where you found the specimen?"

"I am ready any time you are, Mr. Scraggs."

"Then you and I will provide ourselves with shovels and picks, and a week's supply of provisions, and go there alone. Your friend Toby can remain here with Suzanne and keep her company while we are away."

"We will travel in the van, I suppose?"

"Yes. Then we can bring away a quantity of the ore which we can have assayed in San Luis."

"All right. As soon as I can get out of the cove I will make all necessary preparations for the trip, and will drive up to the other side of the point for you. I suppose I can leave my stock of patent remedies here, as it would be foolish to carry the stuff with us."

"There is a small cave in the rocks down on the beach where you can store your stuff for the present. It will be quite safe there. But if your expedition pans out as I fancy it will, I don't think you'll have any further use for your stock in trade."

The old man took up the fish and carried them into the cabin, where Suzanne was already up and stirring about, making preparations for breakfast. An hour after the meal the tide had receded far enough to enable Paul to walk around the point. He found Toby eagerly looking for his own breakfast. Hitching Anna Maria to the wagon, he first took Toby to the hotel, and then drove to a hardware store where he purchased the necessary implements for their surface mining operations. Then he laid in a stock of provisions, with a few necessary cooking utensils.

After that he drove back to the hotel and found the fat boy waiting for him outside.

"Jump up, Toby," said Paul. "You're going to spend a few days at the cove with Suzanne. Her uncle and I are going off into the country on business."

"I don't mind," replied the fat boy; "but I hope you won't forget to buy me a half dozen nice, juicy pies."

"I will get you the pies at a bakery down the street. From the quantity of pies you consume you ought to be a very pious boy," chuckled Paul.

"More likely from the rate I eat pies that I should turn a pie-rate," snickered Toby.

The van drew up near the point, and Paul's trunk and the boxes of cough mixture and salve were transferred to the cave. Then the old hermit and Suzanne appeared.

"So you and Uncle Matthew are going off into the wilderness somewhere, are you?" she said laughingly to Paul.

"We are bound on a voyage of discovery, Miss Suzanne," grinned the boy.

"I suppose there isn't any use of my asking where you are going? I asked uncle, but he wouldn't gratify my curiosity. He is too provokingly mysterious," she added with a pout.

"You shall know all about it when we come back," replied Paul. "I am going to leave Toby in your charge. I hope you will see that he doesn't overeat himself. I'd advise you to lock those half-dozen pies up, and give him only half of one each day."

"Oh, my!" gasped the fat boy. "Don't do that."

"Don't worry, Toby," laughed Suzanne. "I'll see that you shan't suffer."

"If you spoil him while I'm gone, Miss Suzanne, I'll hold you responsible," said Paul.

The girl laughed and Toby grinned, then Paul and the hermit got on the seat of the van, bade Suzanne and the fat youth good-by, and drove off toward the mountain range. Paul and Matthew Scraggs arrived at their destination about dark that day. Next morning after they had made a hasty meal the boy led the old man to the place in the rock spur where he had chipped out the chunk of silver ore. Scraggs made a careful examination of the spur, and at length announced that the rocks were alive with silver quartz.

"This is the outcropping of a bonanza lode which seems to run straight into this mountain. I see enough ore in sight to make you rich. We will now proceed to mark out your claim according to legal requirements, then he will take the specimen to San Luis and have it assayed in order to determine its richness. This valley will soon be peopled with prospectors, many of whom will naturally profit by your discovery."

"Well, we can take up four claims, at any rate, and what is left can go to the public," said Paul.

The boundaries of the four claims were accordingly properly defined. It was subsequently decided that the four should be pooled, and that Paul should be entitled to three-fifths of the results obtained from the claims, and that the hermit, Suzanne and Toby should divide the other two-fifths among them. That afternoon Paul and Matthew Scraggs attacked the spur with pick and shovel, and obtained specimens of silver ore that promised to assay several thousand dollars to the ton.

"As far as I can determine," said the old man, "this ledge shows phenomenal values. The high-grade streak runs here, starting at the foot-wall of the vein. It is several inches wide wherever we have dug into it, and I should say roughly it ought to easily yield \$15,000 to \$18,000 to the ton. There is another streak over here," continued Mr. Scraggs, jabbing his pick into the rock, "that seems to be twelve or fourteen inches wide which we will investigate further to-morrow. It is unusual to uncover such rich values right on the surface, and is due to the unusual conformation of the mountain at this point."

They desisted from further work for the day, and spent the remaining hours of the afternoon figuring upon the probable value of the lode, and the best method of turning the rock-imprisoned silver ore into real money.

That night Paul dreamed that the cove was piled high with brass-bound boxes filled with silver dollars, and that every one of them belonged to him.

CHAPTER XV.—A Rolling Stone at Last Becomes Stationary.

Paul and Matthew Scraggs spent the greater part of a week investigating the silver lode, and then with the van well filled with marked specimens of the quartz they started for San Luis. These specimens were left at the assay office, and the results awaited with intense interest by Paul. The two took up their quarters at the hotel Paul and Toby had patronized for their meals when they were in the town two weeks before. They had nothing to do but wait for the report of the assay office.

"By the way, Mr. Scraags," said Paul on the afternoon of their arrival in town, "do you mind telling me why you went to live in such a lonely place as the cove?"

"I went to live there," the hermit replied, "because I wanted to withdraw myself as far as possible from association with the world."

"If that was your object you couldn't have selected a better spot to live unless you had gone to some uninhabited island."

"I found nothing but knavery and ingratitude in the world," went on the old man, "and I grew tired of it all. I had the cabin built upon those rocks, though the people of San Bruno were not slow in saying I was crazy to select such a place for a habitation. I let them talk, for my likes and dislikes were my own, and for their opinion I cared nothing. Still I did not seek to antagonize them, and after I came into possession of that

chest of money I made many presents to the Church, for I feared that some time an attempt might be made to rob me, and I wanted to rely on the San Bruno authorities for help in case I required it. I arranged that system of signals—a smoke rocket by day, a fire rocket by night—to notify the town when I was in danger or in trouble."

"It is a great scheme," answered Paul.

"I gradually became known as the hermit of San Bruno, and to this title was added that of miser, not because any one knew that I had much money, but because it suited the whim of the people to call me so. Aside from Suzanne, you and those three bandits are the only persons who have actually seen that chest and its contents. I dare say you wonder how I came into possession of so much money."

"I'm not worrying about it, Mr. Scraggs. It's none of my business how you got it. I am sure you came by it honestly, for you don't look like a man who would be guilty of a crime."

"I thank you for your good opinion, Paul Scott. You're a good, straightforward boy, after my own heart. I feel that you are one of the few I have met in this world who are worthy of trust. An honest and true man is one of the noblest works of God—and the scarest. I believe you will grow up to be such, and for that reason I value your acquaintance, and thoroughly trust you. For that reason I rejoice that you have discovered this silver lode, for you will not squander its value in a thousand and one foolish ways, like so many are prone to do."

"I hope not, Mr. Scraggs."

"The money I have—and there is thirty thousand dollars in gold and silver coin in that brass-bound box—would bring me many luxuries if I yearned for such; but its possession is the only luxury I crave for. I love to handle it; to count and recount it at my leisure; and to dream what it will some day do for Suzanne when I am dead and gone. The possession of that money alone makes me feel at ease concerning her future. I believe that heaven sent it to me for her sake."

"Then you did not earn it yourself?"

"No. I have owned many times that amount at various times in my life, but I have lost every dollar. I have been remorselessly robbed right and left by men in whom I reposed implicit faith, and that is the reason why the world and I came to fall out."

"If you've been swindled as you say, I don't wonder that you soured on the world. I'd hate to be skinned myself."

"That chest of money came to me in a strange way," went on the old man, with a far-away look in his eyes.

"A strange way?"

"Yes. I had been living at the cove for perhaps a year. Suzanne was not with me at the time. One night a storm raged along the coast. I afterwards heard some of the people of San Bruno say it was the worst in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. At any rate a good-sized ship went ashore right on the rocks in front of my cabin. She broke up there, and disappeared piece by piece until there was nothing left of her but a lot of wreckage. Two days after the storm, when the sea had become calm once more, I went

fishing as was my custom among those rocks, and then it was that I found that brass-bound box jammed into a crevice near the shore. I could not move it as it stood—it was too heavy. Singular to say, a key was in the lock, so I had no difficulty in opening it. Then I discovered that it was full of coined money. I lost no time, you may guess, in carrying its contents up to the cabin, and then when the chest was empty I had little trouble in conveying that up the rocky path to my dwelling. The identity of the lost vessel was never discovered, and the money consequently became honestly mine. Soon afterward my only sister, who was living in Los Angeles, died, and her child, Suzanne, was thrown upon the world. I at once took her to the cabin, and she has ever since lived with me."

Two days later they got the report of the assay office, and it bore out Matthew Scraggs' estimates almost to the letter. Paul, after a consultation with the hermit, decided to go to Los Angeles and form a company to work the four claims. Of course, as soon as the news got out, as it did almost immediately, there was a rush of prospectors to the San Luis mountains, and the reports that came back set mining speculators by the ears.

Paul had a dozen offers for his rights, one syndicate offering him a million dollars in cash. He declined to accept the offer, and found no difficulty in forming the company he had in view, which he called the San Luis Mining and Milling Company, which he capitalized at \$10,000,000. While Paul had himself elected as president of the enterprise, he persuaded Mr. Scraggs to assume the management of the company. Paul's company was the only one that had easy sailing from the start, for many hundreds of tons of rich ore lay on and close to the surface of his claims, and he was able to begin shipments at once. Finally the syndicate which had made him the original offer of \$1,000,000 for the whole thing submitted another offer of \$5,000,000, and this, on the hermit's advice, he accepted. Two millions of this amount was divided between Matthew Scraggs, Suzanne and Toby, as originally arranged. As for Paul himself, he found himself a millionaire three times over. A few months ago Paul reached his twenty-first birthday, and he celebrated the occasion by uniting himself in marriage to Suzanne Norwood, when the old hermit bestowed his blessing and his share of the San Luis Mining Company's profits on the bride, retaining only the money in the old brass-bound chest at the cabin, where he still lives at a hale and hearty age.

Next week's issue will contain "NEVER SAY DIE; or, THE YOUNG SURVEYOR OF HAPPY VALLEY."

27 YARDS OF FINGERNAILS IN LIFETIME

When you reach the age of fifty you have grown at least twenty-seven yards of fingernails. This statement is based on the measurements made by a Swiss scientist, who founded his calculations on careful observation of the growth of the nails over a definite period of time.

In the course of his experiments the scientist discovered that the nails of children grow faster than those of adults. The thumbnail also grows faster than the nail of the little finger.

CURRENT NEWS

NEEDLES OF RADIUM LOST

The *Medical Record*, New York, relates that the treatment of a charity patient in an Oklahoma City hospital has resulted in the loss of radium valued at between \$3,000 and \$3,500 by a group of doctors in that city. The radium in two needles was placed in a cancerous growth. The patient disappeared with the radium, and police investigation has failed to reveal any trace of his whereabouts.

FLOUR SACKS AS UNDERWEAR

Several thousand American flour sacks of cotton have been turned into underclothes for little ones in Japan, whose garments were destroyed in the quake, say travelers returning here.

A semicircle, but from the seamed end, affords a hole for the neck and slicing off each corner adjacent permits the arms to wave freely. In most instances the lettered advertisements remain, with the result that many local cities in the United States are well known to the young folks.

FOSSILS DISCOVERED THROUGH X-RAYS

A curious application of the X-rays to the discovery of unseen things has been made by Professor Lemoine at Rheims. The chalk strata in that part of France contains the fossil bones of birds, reptiles and mammals, and frequently these are shattered in the attempt at removal. It occurred to Professor Lemoine that the embedded fossils might be photographed by the aid of X-rays, since the latter pass readily through chalk but are largely intercepted by the phosphates of bones. The resulting photographs clearly indicated the details of the hidden fossils.

UTILIZING SEWER GAS

An Australian engineer has put sewer gas to work driving an engine. He built a sixteen horsepower plant and collected the gas which emanated from the septic tanks of his town of Parramatta to use as fuel for his engine. The supply turned out to be so sure that the plant can be left to run for days at a time without any attention.

In this particular installation the work is merely to pump out the sewage itself; but nevertheless it saved the cost of the coal.

TAKE NOTICE!

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is now on the newsstands and contains the marvelous mystery story —

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By ERIC HOWARD

It should be read by every boy who is interested in detective tales.

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by J. B. WARRENTON, also appears in this number.

The short stories which this issue contains are of special interest to our readers. The titles are

THE KALONG KISS, by Douglas M. Dold

WHISPERING EYES, by Ernest A. Phillips

THE BARSTOW CASE, by J. Werner Phelps

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(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XXIII.

Trouble All Around.

"I'll look out for her, boss," replied the Mestizo, "and do you look out for yourself. Tony is a bad one when the pulque is in him, and there is no telling where he and Ramon may be."

"I have the rifle," was the answer. "It was here in the cavern, boys," he added, and, as he spoke, Doctor Furman picked it up and led the way to the ladder.

Although nothing had been said by Doctor Furman, Jack understood instinctively that this return to the Desert Home meant the burial of the dead.

They ascended to the upper cave and passed out on the ledge, seeing nothing of Ramon nor Tony.

"I suppose I can carry my nugget," said Jack, when they found themselves down on the desert.

"Certainly. Why not?" was the reply.

They pushed on as rapidly as possible, and in due time reached the ranch.

"We want to be cautious now," said the doctor. "Tony is a dangerous proposition, and if Ramon is drunk he may prove just as bad."

But they could see nothing of either, nor had they seen anything of Dr. Glick and the car.

Arthur having told of the money bag, they went to Glick's room and got it. The doctor packed it in an old grip along with some of his belongings.

Edna's room was then visited, and a suit-case was filled with such articles of clothing as she had requested her father to get.

It seems a shame to abandon all these things," said Jack. "It must have cost you a small fortune to bring the furniture in here."

"It did," replied the doctor. "They were all hauled across the desert from Prescott by a mule-team driven by Pedro's father, who was a most faithful man. He had been insane, but he entirely recovered under my treatment. I regretted his death immensely. But now, Jack, we have two graves to dig, for I shall not leave poor Andy unburied."

They went right at it, digging the graves in the garden just back from the shore of the lake. Here, wrapped in sheets, the dead were interred. The doctor personally attended to his unfortunate sister. Jack did not even see her face. It was a relief to the boy when it was all over.

He then got the nugget from under the bed, and they started back for the cave.

They reached the foot of the range and began the ascent. Jack had the suitcase and the nugget, while the doctor carried the grip and the rifle. The door leading into the cave had been left unlocked but closed. When they reached it they found it wide open.

"Now who has been here?" breathed the doctor, setting down the grip. "We must be on our guard."

It was too dark inside to see much. The doctor stepped in and groped for the lantern, which he had left in a certain place but failed to find it. He came out hastily, and so informed Jack in a whisper.

"I'm afraid this is Tony and Ramon's work," he said. "They may be lurking inside there. Still, there is little chance that they can have discovered my trap-door. That was known only to Edna, Manuel and myself. Manuel swears he did not give it away."

He had scarcely spoken when a dull crash was heard in the darkness, proceeding, seemingly, from underground.

"What in the world was that?" exclaimed Jack.

"My dear boy, it can be but one thing, I'm afraid," grasped the doctor, "and that is the ladder falling. We must instantly know!"

He struck a match, and again entered the cave, but a draught of cooler air struck the match and extinguished it.

"The trap is open!" cried the doctor, striking another, and so it proved, for this time the light did not fail.

Not only was the trap open, but the ladder was gone.

"They have cut the rope-lashings and pulled down the ladder," cried the doctor.

He bent down over the hole and shouted:

"Hello, down there! Tony—Ramon. Hello!"

A wild laugh was the answer, and then something was shouted in Spanish.

"Now may Heaven preserve my dear child!" groaned Doctor Furman. "They have captured all hands, Jack. They have learned the secret of the river; they are off with the gold!"

* * * * *

After Jack and Doctor Furman left the lower cave, Arthur sat talking with Edna, while Manuel finished loading the boats.

The bags all stowed away, there was still room enough for everybody, and a trifle to spare. Manuel now put in certain baskets of provisions which he had brought from the other cave. This done, he filled his pipe and sat down to rest and smoke.

Suddenly Edna heard footsteps. "Father and Jack must be coming," she said.

She sprang up and hurried to where the rocks took the turn to meet them.

Arthur, following her with his eyes, saw her vanish around the wall, but instantly she reappeared running.

"Oh, Arthur!" she called. "It's Tony and Ramon!"

Pedro, who had been asleep, sprang to his feet. "Shoot them, senior!" he cried. "Shoot them, or they'll kill us sure, same as they killed Andy and Juan."

Arthur drew the revolver and staggered to his feet, having all he could do to balance himself.

(To be continued.)

GOOD READING

DEER BREAK STORE WINDOWS

Shortly after 3 o'clock the other morning several officers heard a crash of glass and ran to the store at 93 Main street, Worcester, Mass., where a large pane had been shattered.

Believing the store was being robbed, the officers sprinted and arrived in time to see two deer leap from the store window and run away through Market street.

A short time later a policeman reported that he had seen the two deer, one with antlers, on a nearby street, headed toward Green Hill park.

RAT SKINS SELL WELL

It is proposed to establish a business in Calcutta of procuring and preparing the skins of the brown rat, which is very numerous in that metropolis of India.

It has been found that the skin of this animal is well adapted to a variety of purposes, such as the binding of books, the making of purses, gloves and other articles. It is said that already the traffic in this commodity amounts to about \$250,000 a year in Great Britain and advertisements have appeared for supplies of skins of the brown rat in lots of from 100 to 10,000.

It is expected that a very profitable industry on this order can be established in Calcutta.

PAYS EMPLOYEES \$411,000 IN BONUS

Four hundred and eleven thousand dollars was distributed recently to employees of Alexander Smith & Sons Carpet Company of Yonkers as the twenty-sixth semi-annual dividend according to the firm's bonus plan started in 1911. This brings the total bonuses paid since that time to \$5,808,000.

The plan was instituted by Alexander Smith Cochran, former husband of Ganna Walsa, the present Mrs. Harold F. McCormick. Under the plan employees are paid according to their priority of employment and to the nature of their work. Percentages range from 2 to 15 per cent. of employees' wages for the preceding six months.

There are 6,628 employees of the company. Each received a bonus. The distribution was about \$600 per man, but because of the sliding scale older employees received much more than this and newer ones less. When the plan was instituted in 1911 there were about 1,100 employees.

STAMP ISSUE FOR MANZONI

Italy is taking a leading place among the countries of the world in issuing commemorative postage stamps. A series of six values will soon appear to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Alessandro Manzoni, who is called the founder of the romantic school in Italian literature. This will be the fifth commemorative issue by Italy in less than four years.

Manzoni is best known by his "I Promessi Sposi," or "The Betrothed," which made its appearance in 1822 and which was called by Sir

Walter Scott the finest novel ever written. It raised Manzoni to the first rank of literary fame, and scenes from that work will be depicted on four of the new stamps. A picture of the house in which Manzoni was born in Milan in 1785 will appear on one stamp, and on the highest value, 5 lire, will be his portrait.

Manzoni lived to be 88, dying on May 22, 1873, and he is buried in Milan. Verdi's Requiem was composed especially in his memory. It is interesting to note that in early life he was regarded as a dunce in school. Besides his great work he composed several poems and tragedies, including a famous lyric on the death of Napoleon in 1821.

In 1921 Italy issued a set of three stamps in commemoration of Dante and in the following year a set was issued in honor of Mazzini. In 1921 there also appeared a commemorative set in honor of the third anniversary of the victory of the Piave, and another set to celebrate the reunion of the former Venetian territory, long in possession of Austria, with Italy. The first Italian commemorative stamps appeared in 1910 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the freedom of Sicily. There were two values bearing a portrait of Garibaldi, and later in the same year another set, also with Garibaldi's head, was issued on the fiftieth anniversary of the national plebiscite of the Southern States. This was followed in 1911 with the Italian Kingdom jubilee set, and in 1912, when the Campanile at Venice was re-erected, two special stamps were issued to commemorate that event.

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HARRY E. WOLFF, Publisher, Inc.

166 West 23d Street

New York

INTERESTING RADIO NEWS AND HINTS

When you use a variometer between the aerial and ground for tuning it is preferable to also connect in series with the ground a variable condenser of about forty-three plates.

When testing, the "B" battery will soon be ruined by testing it by means of the spark. Such action short circuits the battery. Such battery should be tested with a voltmeter, never by an ammeter.

A regenerative set is equal to a non-regenerative set using one stage of radio frequency with regeneration unless you are technically inclined. Radio frequency will amplify a weak signal so that the detector tube will rectify it, but as a rule a regenerative set will accomplish practically the same results. Radio frequency is employed to amplify weak signals, while audio frequency is employed for giving volume.

When outside aerials are not permitted and an inside one is used, connect one end of the wire to the aerial connection on your instrument, run the wire up to the picture molding, laying it out nice and straight so that it cannot be seen. The distant end is not connected to anything. The aerial must not be grounded, but the ground wire from the instrument can be connected to a radiator or water pipe.

All condensers are measurable in units of electrical capacity. For usual purposes the microfarad has been chosen for the unit of measurement of small condensers used for radio work. It is found that, other things being equal, the capacity of a condenser depends upon the number of plates. But other factors also enter into the calculation of condenser capacity; the dielectric or separating medium, the distances between the plates and the size of the plates. Thus it is possible, by varying any or all of these factors, to change one way or the other the capacity of a condenser. Varying any one of these factors and keeping the others constant produces a variable condenser.

Any one is certainly taking a chance when he puts eight volts on the filament of a tube, even if the cells are nearly exhausted. Incidentally, using the battery when it is nearly discharged, is not the best thing for it, as a storage battery should never be allowed to run entirely down. The best way is to use only six volts and then, if you have a charging apparatus, charge the outfit up about every third night, if it is used every evening. Just connect the charger on before going to bed, and in the morning the battery should be fully charged. It is well to test with a hydrometer, though, as an overcharge is about as bad for the battery as leaving it fully discharged. Keep the battery at about the same charge and it will last for years.

Sometimes it is advisable to employ a 23-plate condenser across the secondary of a coupler. Its

purpose is to aid in tuning the secondary coil thereby rendering better selectivity and in turn tuning out the unwanted stations. Of course if the set is in close proximity to a transmitting station it is of no use to try and tune the stations out with such an instrument. It will help at times but its main purpose is to tune out stations located at a distance from the receiver. A fixed condenser must be kept in the circuit if you intend to hear the concerts clearly. The type of crystal suited for local reception is corborundum, gelena or one of the synthetic crystals now on the market.

DEAD SPOTS

The Bureau of Standards is trying to determine the cause of "dead spots" in the ether which seem to form an almost impenetrable barrier between a number of cities in the United States. Montreal hears Philadelphia concerts clearly, but sections of New York State which lie between cannot hear the Quaker City with any intensity. Philadelphians have trouble in hearing Newark and New York and stations as loud as KDKA at Pittsburgh. At pronounced "dead spot" is reported to exist in the ether tract between Baltimore and Washington, D. C. "Dead spots" are thought to be caused by partial absorption of the Hertzian waves.

Ship stations in Long Island Sound find it difficult to establish satisfactory communication with shore stations on the Atlantic side of the island, although the widest point across the island is only forty miles. When ships are close to the Jersey coast much difficulty is experienced in establishing radio contact with New York if the distance is over sixty miles. Listeners in Atlantic City report trouble in picking up loud signals from Philadelphia and New York. It is thought that this may be due to the sandy nature of the soil, which contains metallic particles which have a tendency to absorb the electromagnetic waves. It is known that sand dunes produce a shielding effect.

Signals from Pittsburgh are said to be feeble when they reach Cleveland, and a similar condition exists between Boston and the western section of Massachusetts. It is the opinion of some who have studied the situation that iron deposits in the Monson district serve as a shield and decrease the Boston signal strength in Western Massachusetts. Since the early days of wireless it has been thought that the hills and mountains absorb and deflect the Hertzian waves. The naval radio station at Otter Cliffs, Bar Harbor, Me., is located in a sort of pocket formed by two mountains. This station is noted for reliable reception from European stations and from ships at sea. Distress calls originating 900 miles east of Bermuda have been picked up at Otter Cliffs when no other station along the Atlantic Coast seemed to hear the S. O. S. Experts advanced the theory that ore deposits in the mountains acted as a "back stop" for the waves, deflecting them to the antennae in the valley.

Signals in transit across forests have lost much of their power, especially in the Spring and early Summer when the sap and foliage make the trees better conductors of electricity. Radio waves passing over and through the trees give up energy just as in striking a steel building. If a short length of wire serving as an antenna can absorb sufficient energy from a passing wave to create a sound which can be heard several hundred feet away from the phones, one can realize how much energy may be intercepted by a large steel building with its electric wiring and pipes connected to the ground. Such absorption is particularly noticeable when short wave lengths are used.

When a wave length is eight to fourteen miles long "dead spots" seem to cause little interference. Such a wave is comparatively long compared to steel structures, and for this reason it is thought they do not obstruct the wave's path to such a great extent.

One theory given to account for "dead spots," chiefly the one supposed to exist between Washington and Baltimore, is that numerous high-tension cables and conduits absorb the radio impulses. Yet, despite the great net work of high tension lines radiating from Niagara Falls, listeners in that locality find it ideal for reception of radio concerts from all directions.

The most plausible theory to explain "dead spots" seems to be the presence of mineral deposits in the hills and mountains. However, the direction in which the transmitting aerial and the receiving antenna points has a great deal to do with the strength of signals from different stations. Ships have been known to receive strong signals from distant stations when suddenly a shift in the course would point the antenna in a different direction and the signals would become faint. If the antenna extends east and west with the lead-in taken off the western end, it will be most suitable for reception from the west. Imagination coupled with the directional effect of the antenna has helped many radio listeners to have a vision of "dead spots" in the ether.

THE DIODE VALVE

During the last summer the reflex mode of reception gained a wide usage among radio fans who want a circuit that will work on dry cell tubes—a circuit for a portable set.

Even now there is a demand for a single tube or two tube reflex receiver for use by the beginner who wants to make the tubes perform double or triple duty as a radio frequency amplifier, an audio frequency amplifier, and sometimes also as a detector.

Most of the simple reflex circuits, however, have made use of the crystal rather than the vacuum tube as a detector. This, of course, simplifies things enormously: there is one less tube used, there is also less drain on the "A" and "B" batteries and the circuit is also less complicated. And yet there is not any appreciable loss in signal strength because the radio frequency signal has been amplified to such an extent that the sensitivity of the crystal does not make very much difference.

There is one serious drawback to the use of a crystal as a detector in one of these single tube

reflex sets nevertheless. This is in the matter of adjustment. The operator has to be forever fooling with the "catwhisker" and eventually he becomes tired of it and gives up in disgust. This is not so when more than one stage of radio frequency amplification is used, because the radio frequency signal then becomes so strong that the crystal adjustment makes relatively little difference.

Another drawback with the crystal detector in a simple single tube crystal reflex receiver is the fact that such a simple set seldom makes use of a potentiometer for controlling regeneration. It is all done with the crystal adjustment.

In other words, they may have the set working nicely, receiving signals from WHN, and wish to change to another wave length; say, to listen to WJZ on a higher wave length. As soon as they tune to WJZ they find him surrounded by a peculiar whistle and must change the adjustment of the crystal before they have the signals coming in again. A change back to the original wave length again necessitates a change in crystal adjustment to take out the "squeak."

A Fleming valve, or Diode tube as it is called by one manufacturer, is one of the original vacuum tubes having two elements, a filament and a plate. The tube when used as a detector alone, without any radio frequency amplification, is a steady, reliable detector.

The tube used in this way has two distinct advantages in the reflex set. It produces as good a signal as the crystal; it needs no adjustment for sensitivity, and it requires no further adjustment for wave length changes. Set the filament rheostat to the most sensitive point and the set is ready at all times.

The parts necessary to build the set are: A 1, variocoupler; B1, variable condenser .0005 mfd; C 1, radio frequency transformer; D 1, audio frequency transformer (for first stage); E 1, WD12 vacuum tube; F 1, Diode tube; G 1, fixed condenser .001 mfd; H 1, 1½ volt dry cell; I 1, small "A" battery, 45 volts; J 2, rheostats, 6 ohms, Diode tube socket; M 1, pair phones; N, panel; O, cabinet; P, connecting wire; Q, binding posts; R, solder.

In building the set the best procedure would be to mount the variocoupler on the left end of the panel (looking from the front) with the variable condenser beside it. The two rheostats should be mounted next, beside the condenser, with the WD-12 and the Diode tube directly in back of them, respectively. Then mount the two transformers on the base in such a manner that the connections will be as short as possible.

In wiring up the set, connect the two fixed condensers, one across the primary of the audio frequency transformer and the other across the phones and the "B" battery. Keep all the wires as short as you are able to and keep the grid connections isolated from the other parts of the wiring as much as possible.

If you already have a one, two or three tube reflex set with a crystal detector you may use one of these tubes, obtaining an extra rheostat, a dry cell of 1½ volts and connect it directly to your present crystal detector stand. This will enable you to compare the two methods of detection for yourself.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

HOUND RUNS FOX TWO DAYS

Starting with a pack of nine other canines, in a chase for a fox, a thoroughbred fox-hound, owned by C. D. Mitchell of Farmer City, Ill., ran for two days and six hours before it finally fell exhausted. All of the dogs with the single exception gave up the chase. The owner supposed that an accident had befallen the missing animal.

During the afternoon of the second day, after the chase started, a farmer near Onarga noticed a fox limping along and, a short time afterward, a hound. The latter fell exhausted after making an unsuccessful attempt to get through a fence. A tag on the collar denoted the owner.

The dog's feet were raw and bleeding from the long run and it is believed to have followed the fox for fifty to seventy-five miles, probably running in a circle.

A METER FOR THE COAL CHUTE

From England comes the announcement of the invention of a registering meter for measuring fine coal, grain, or other material which is loaded through chutes.

The device consists of a bar of metal, twisted to form a screw of very long pitch, which nearly fills the chute. The coal or grain, falling down the chute, flows around this screw and makes it turn. A meter is attached to the screw and adjusted so that it registers the quantity of material that flows past; the hand on the meter dial gives a direct reading, usually in ounces.

The device can be oiled while it is in operation and is easily removed to be cleaned or readjusted.

It is claimed as the result of experiments that the accuracy of the instrument is within 2 per cent. of perfection.

HINTS ON HOME PLUMBING

Prevent a plumber's bill this winter by the "stitch in time" method, suggests Miss May Cowles of the Home Economics Department of the University of Wisconsin. "Know something about the plumbing system in your own home

and determine where it might be improved, know where to turn the water off. When the house is to be closed up for a few days or a week during a spell of cold weather, it is wise to turn the water off. Label the cut-off and show every member of the family what to do when the water supply needs to be discontinued.

"Be able to reach every part of your plumbing for repairs. Never allow any pipe to be sealed up in the partition or flooring. If there is any trouble, the plumber should be able to get at it without tearing up a part of the house. A plumber's pump should be owned by every woman. It can be purchased for a few cents and makes it possible to clean out clogged pipes without the aid of a plumber. Be careful not to allow coffee grounds or tea leaves into the sink, as they tend to accumulate in the pipes. Greasy water will also cause trouble.

"Putting a new washer in the faucet is another job the housewife can save money on. Cut off the water supply, unscrew the top of the faucet, unscrew the washer and adjust the new one. Replace the faucet and connect the water supply.

LAUGHS

"I don't know what to do with my son. He's so irresponsible." "Get him on the Weather Bureau."

A little boy who had often heard his father talk about the Civil War, finally asked: "Father, did any one help you put down the Rebellion?"

She—Soldiers must be fearfully dishonest. He—why? She—Well, it seems a nightly occurrence for a sentry to be relieved of his watch.

Parson—Your husband says he always feels so refreshed after one of my sermons. Mrs. A—Yes, a good sleep does refresh one, you know.

"Why do you wear that costume? It looks like half-mourning." "Well, every evening when you come home from the office you complain of being half dead."

Ma—Willie, what's your little brother crying for? Willie—Aw! just because he don't want to learn anything. I just took his candy and showed him how to eat it.

Wife (on her return home)—Have you noticed that my husband missed me very much while I was away, Mary? Maid—Well, I didn't notice it so much at first, but yesterday he seemed to be in despair.

Father (to his old friend's pretty daughter)—Good-by, my dear. I won't kiss you; I have such a cold. His Son (with alacrity)—Can I do anything for you, father?

Mrs. Neighbors—They tell me your son is in the college football eleven. Mrs. Malaprop—Yes, indeed. Mrs. Neighbors—Do you know what position he plays? Mrs. Malaprop—Ain't sure, but I think he's one of the drawbacks.

BRIEF BUT POINTED

A FLAMING BIRD

People in Western Washington are witnessing the remarkable spectacle of birds flying through the air, their backs flaming with fire. This is the optical illusion of the Chinese game bird known as the "fireback," one of the freak species imported from the Orient and recently liberated by J. W. Kinney, State Superintendent of Game and Fish.

The "fireback," the male of which is a beautiful bird resembling the pheasant, is an amazing object when flying. The red-feathered back reflects the sunlight in a flame-like color, giving the impression its body is afire. Other game birds freed in the State are Chinese woodcock, Chukko partridges, sand grouse and bamboo partridges. The gay-colored Mongolian pheasant introduced a few years ago are now seen by thousands.

LIONESS KILLS "SUPER"

An enraged lioness tore or mauled to death an aged Italian, Augusto Palombi, a "super" in a moving picture company, which was filming "Quo Vadis," in Rome, Italy. The entire company witnessed the tragedy.

Several lions and lionesses had been brought into the arena of the circus Mabimus of Nero, which was constructed for the pictures. The lioness became highly excited, jumped over the barrier, landed squarely upon Palombi and began tearing at his flesh and crushing his bones with her huge paws.

Actors and actresses, directors, camera men and "extras" flew in terror from the arena as the beast was mauling its victim. The keepers of the lions beat back the queen of the jungle into her place inside the arena after they had wounded her several times with pistol shots.

A NEW THEORY OF THE ORIGIN OF MERCURY

The origin of the planet Mercury has been to some degree a puzzle to scientists for some time. A recently promulgated theory, which European scientists pronounce "daring, but rather attractive," states that Mercury was once part of the planet Venus.

According to Darwin's theory, the moon was once a part of the earth, and was torn off during a time of high solar tides, which increased the sun's attracting power enormously. Venus and the earth are nearly alike in size, but Venus is much nearer the sun, and if a similar disruption took place the displaced part would be larger than one moon and be torn off with more force—so much so that it would escape from its mother planet's attraction entirely and fall into an independent orbit of its own around the sun.

The fact that Mercury has a long rotation period, according to some scientists, tends to support this theory. Another thing which lends its

support to the idea is the fact that the whiteness of Mercury and that of the moon are nearly alike in degree—their "albedoes," to put it in scientific language, are practically similar.

"PRIVATE DAYZELL"

James M. Dalzell, aged 85, more readily known to many by his pen name, "Private Dalzell," veteran of two wars, writer, patriot, and statesman, died on Jan. 29 in his home in Washington.

Through special action of the Board of Trustees of Washington and Jefferson College last June, Mr. Dalzell received the degree of bachelor of arts 60 years after he left, with other mates in the junior class of that institution, to fight for the Union in the Civil War. His journalistic experiences began when he corresponded with newspapers during that conflict, and his pen was active from then until the time of his death.

He declined promotion in the United Army, preferring to remain in the ranks. After the war he took up the study of law and practiced in Caldwell, Ohio, for 30 years. He served two terms in the Ohio Legislature as a Republican and took part in many stirring political campaigns. He also served during the Spanish-American War in the Hospital Corps. When the World War came he volunteered his services in any capacity, but his age would not allow him to see active service. He devoted much of his time to Red Cross and Liberty Loan drives.

HOW WARM SHOULD A ROOM BE?

The majority of business offices and homes are kept entirely too warm to provide the best possible degree of comfort, health and energy, in the opinion of many competent physicians.

In America we have been accustomed to consider sixty-eight degrees of temperature as about right. And, no doubt, we could all get along very well if this point of temperature was constantly maintained, but as a matter of fact 70 and 72 degrees of temperature is the heat we usually work and live in when indoor in the winter time.

The northern European races cannot be considered more warm blooded than Americans, but their homes are never kept as warm as ours and they seem to enjoy good health and miss nothing by way of comfort. Too much heat in the house is a frequent cause for coughs and colds. Nor is the practice of sleeping in cold bedrooms after spending the day in superheated living-rooms conducive to good health, although it must be admitted that sleeping in well-ventilated bedrooms is much better than spending the night in those that are poorly ventilated.

Medical science has proved that anybody, except the very old, can be comfortable and, perhaps, a little more active in a temperature of sixty-five degrees than in one of seventy-two, and this difference of seven degrees in temperature, statisticians have found out, will save 20 per cent. of the amount of our coal bills.

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

PAPER PROTECTS PLANTS FROM WEEDS

Here's a tip that may help some backyard farmer who is troubled with an excess of weeds and a shortage of hours and inclination to pull them out. Pineapple planters in Hawaii have hit upon the scheme of stretching broad strips of soft brown paper over the soil where the pineapples are planted, and have increased production about 50 per cent., according to a report from that interesting section of the country. The fruit is planted in loose soil which is likewise very conducive for the growth of weeds. It has been found that the paper smothers the weeds and retains the moisture in the soil. The pineapple plants will grow up through the paper.

Waste fibers of sugar cane are utilized in manufacturing the paper. These fibers were discarded as being of no value until some practical and scientific minded person conceived their present use.

FOOTBALL IN BARE FEET

Barefooted football is played regularly in Honolulu. The closing game for the amateur championship of the island of Oahu has just been played, the opposing teams being the Pawaas and allhiwaenas. The Pawaas won by a score of 7 to 3. Both teams played in their bare feet and some wonderful kicks were made. Moiliili field where the game took place was filled with a large and enthusiastic crowd who cheered the players. All of the kicks were squarely made upon the toes. One drop kick was for 35 yards and the ball went true over the bar.

Playing football barefooted is done by the amateur players of Honolulu. The teams are made up of a mixture of races, embracing Hawaiian, Japanese, Koreans, Filipinos, Porto Ricans and Portuguese.

On account of the mildness of the climate there the average boy does not put on shoes until he is nearly out of his teens. Summer and winter he goes barefoot. For this reason their feet become hardened to rough usage and kicking the football with the bare toes is not looked upon as any unusual accomplishment. Upon every playground scores of young boys may be seen almost any day during football season, kicking the big ball around with their bare feet.

PAPER THAT WON'T BURN

A recent development in the field of paper manufacturing has been brought about by an Eastern paper company, who have, says *Popular Mechanics*, perfected a process for producing paper that will not burst into flames even when subjected to a high degree of continued heat.

The material chars and becomes black under the application of fire, but never quite burns. Moreover, written or printed matter remains fairly legible even after the paper has been held in the fire for some time.

The fireproofing process does not interfere with the proper absorption of ink, so that the paper can be used for correspondence or printing purposes in the same manner as ordinary paper.

This invention greatly lessens the danger from spontaneous combustion or from carelessly thrown away matches or cigarette and cigar stubs. Valuable records or other documents which are prepared on this stock run a greatly lessened risk of complete loss in case of fire.

Several other uses of the fireproof paper suggest themselves, among them covers for magazines, serving as an insulation to the pages within; fireproof curtains of various sorts and special rugs or carpets to minimize the danger of fire in offices or homes.

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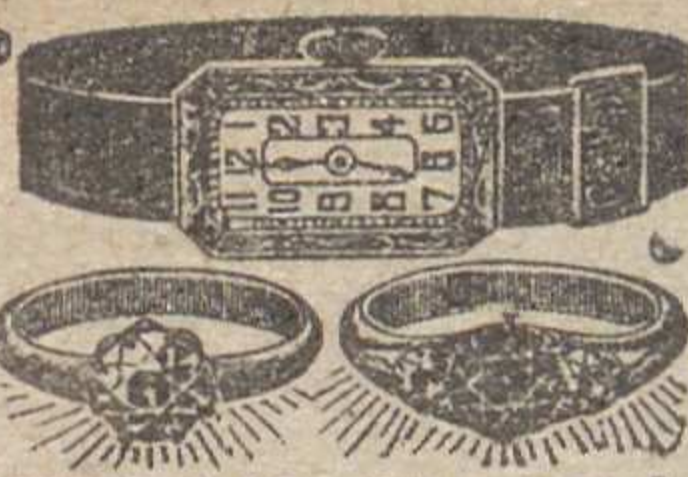
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